

FARRAR'S  
Life  
OF  
Christ

*By* FREDERIC W. FARRAR

*Condensed and Edited by*

Theodore W. Engstrom  
*Editor-in-Chief, Christian Digest*

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## *Editor's Introduction*

THE magnificent *Life of Christ* written by Dean Frederic William Farrar is ranked first among the best biographies of our Lord written since the time of the inspired evangelists. For good and readily evident reasons, this remarkable book has been established as a truly great Christian classic.

Dean Farrar of London was one of the most talked-of men in literary circles in England during his lifetime—in the last half of the nineteenth century. He is the author of many scholarly theological works and also was a contributor to *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and other such works. At the very pinnacle of all his writings stands this heart-warming, Christ-exalting biography of the greatest Personality the world has ever known or will know.

Farrar's *Life of Christ* is charming yet instructive, erudite yet positively true to the Word of God. It is evident on every page that the author's sole purpose is to magnify Christ as the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, the God Incarnate, the only Saviour of sinful man.

Dean Farrar carefully follows the details and sequence of the Gospel narratives. The reader is brought to a new and deeper appreciation of the tremendous earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ as this appealing biography is developed. The author himself says, "These pages should fill the minds of those who read them with solemn and not ignoble thoughts; they should add sunlight to daylight by making the happy happier; they should encourage the toiler; they should console the sorrowful; they should point the

## INTRODUCTION

weak to the one true source of moral strength." Surely this will be evident as the reader goes through the pages of this book.

It is likewise important to quote another remark of Dean Farrar: "It is perhaps yet more important to add that this life of Christ is avowedly and unconditionally the work of a believer."

It must be recognized that this condensation retains only the highlights of Farrar's biography. Of necessity, entire chapters were omitted and other chapters were considerably condensed. All of the extensive footnotes have been deleted. Yet withal it has been the desire of the editor to retain the singular high points in what has proved to him to be a tremendously challenging and soul-stirring production. May this volume in its condensed, "streamlined" form be blessed to aid the cause of truth and righteousness in this "streamlined" twentieth century.

THEODORE W. ENGSTROM

*Grand Rapids, Michigan*

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## Chapter 1

### THE NATIVITY

ONE mile from Bethlehem is a little plain, in which, under a grove of olives, stands the bare and neglected chapel known by the name of "The Angel to the Shepherds." It is built over the traditional site of the fields where, in the beautiful language of Luke—more exquisite than any idyl to Christian ears—"there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night, when, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them," and to their happy ears were uttered the good tidings of great joy, that unto them was born that day in the city of David a Saviour, which was Christ the Lord.

The associations of our Lord's nativity were all of the humblest character, and the very scenery of His birthplace was connected with memories of poverty and toil. On that night, indeed, it seemed as though the heavens must burst to disclose their radiant minstrelsies; and the stars, and the feeding sheep, and the "light and sound in the darkness and stillness," and the rapture of faithful hearts, combine to furnish us with a picture painted in the colors of heaven. But in the brief and thrilling verses of the Evangelist we are not told that those angel songs were heard by any except the wakeful shepherds of an obscure village; and those shepherds, amid the chill dews of a winter night, were guarding their flocks from the wolf and the robber, in fields where Ruth, their Saviour's ancestress, had gleaned, sick

at heart, amid the alien corn, and David, the despised and youngest son of a numerous family, had followed the ewes great with young.

"And suddenly," adds the sole Evangelist who has narrated the circumstances of that memorable night in which Jesus was born, amid the indifference of a world unconscious of its Deliverer, "there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will."

"Come now! let us go into Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord made known to us," said the shepherds, when those angel songs had ceased to break the starry silence. Their way would lead them up the terraced hill, and through the moonlit gardens of Bethlehem, until they reached the summit of the grey ridge on which the little town is built. On that summit stood the village inn. The khan (or caravansary) of a Syrian village, at that day, was probably identical, in its appearance and accommodation, with those which still exist in modern Palestine. A khan is a low structure, built of rough stones, and generally only a single story in height. It consists for the most part of a square enclosure, in which the cattle can be tied up in safety for the night, and an arched recess for the accommodation of travelers. The *leewan*, or paved floor of the recess, is raised a foot or two above the level of the courtyard. A large khan—such, for instance, as that of which the ruins may still be seen at Khan Minyeh, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee—might contain a series of such recesses, which are, in fact, low small rooms with no front wall to them. They are, of course, perfectly public; everything that takes place in them is visible to every person in the khan. They are also totally devoid of even the most ordinary furniture. The traveler may bring his own carpet if he likes, may sit cross-legged upon it for his meals, and may lie upon it at night. As a rule, too, he must bring his own food, attend

to his own cattle, and draw his own water from the neighboring spring. He would neither expect nor require attendance, and would pay only the merest trifle for the advantage of shelter, safety, and a floor on which to lie. But if he chanced to arrive late, and the *leewans* were all occupied by earlier guests, he would have no choice but to be content with such accommodation as he could find in the courtyard below, and secure for himself and his family such small amount of cleanliness and decency as are compatible with an unoccupied corner on the filthy area, which must be shared with horses, mules, and camels. The litter, the closeness, the unpleasant smell of the crowded animals, the unwelcome intrusion of the pariah dogs, the necessary society of the very lowest hangers-on of the caravansary are adjuncts to such a position which can only be realized by any traveler in the East who happens to have been placed in similar circumstances.

In Palestine it not unfrequently happens that the entire khan, or at any rate the portion of it in which the animals are housed, is one of those innumerable caves which abound in the limestone rocks of its central hills. Such seems to have been the case at the little town of Bethlehem-Ephratah, in the land of Judah. Justin Martyr the Apologist, who, from his birth at Shechem, was familiar with Palestine, and who lived less than a century after the time of our Lord, places the scene of the nativity in a cave. This is, indeed, the ancient and constant tradition both of the Eastern and the Western Churches, and it is one of the few to which, though unrecorded in the Gospel history, we may attach a reasonable probability.

From their northern home at Nazareth, in the mountains of Zabulon, Joseph, the village carpenter, had made his way along the wintry roads with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. Fallen as were their fortunes, they were both of the house and lineage of David, and they were traversing a journey of eighty miles to the village which had

been the home of their great ancestor while he was still a ruddy shepherd lad, tending his flocks upon the lonely hills. The object of that toilsome journey, which could not but be disagreeable to the settled habits of Oriental life, was to enroll their names as members of the house of David in a census which had been ordered by the Emperor Augustus. In the political condition of the Roman Empire, of which Judea then formed a part, a single whisper of the Emperor was sufficiently powerful to secure the execution of his mandates in the remotest corners of the civilized world. Great as are the historic difficulties in which this census is involved, there seem to be good independent grounds for believing that it may have been originally ordered by Sentius Saturninus, that it was begun by Publius Sulpicius Quirinus, when he was for the first time legate of Syria, and that it was completed during his second term of office. In deference to Jewish prejudices, any infringement of which was the certain signal for violent tumults and insurrection, it was not carried out in the ordinary Roman manner, at each person's place of residence, but according to Jewish custom, at the town to which their family originally belonged.

Traveling in the East is a very slow and leisurely affair, and was likely to be still more so if, as is probable, the country was at that time agitated by political animosities. Beeroth, which is fifteen miles distant from Bethlehem, or possibly even Jerusalem, which is only six miles off, may have been the resting place of Mary and Joseph before this last stage of their journey. But the heavy languor, or even the commencing pangs of travail, must necessarily have retarded the progress of the maiden-mother. Others who were traveling on the same errand would easily have passed them on the road, and when, after toiling up the steep hillside, by David's well, they arrived at the khan—probably the very one which had been known for centuries as the House of Chimham, and if so, covering perhaps the very ground on which, one thousand years before, had stood the hereditary



house of Boaz, of Jesse, and of David—every *leewan* was occupied. The enrollment had drawn so many strangers to the little town that “there was no room for them in the inn.” In the rude limestone grotto attached to it as a stable, among the hay and straw spread for the food and rest of the cattle, weary with their day’s journey, far from home, in the midst of strangers, in the chilly winter night—in circumstances so devoid of all earthly comfort or splendor that it is impossible to imagine a humbler nativity—Christ was born.

Guided by the lamp which usually swings from the center of a rope hung across the entrance of the khan, the shepherds made their way to the inn of Bethlehem, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger. The fancy of poet and painter has reveled in the imaginary glories of the scene. They have sung of the “bright harnessed angels” who hovered there, and of the stars lingering beyond their time to shed their sweet influences upon that smiling infancy. They have painted the radiation of light from His manger-cradle, illuminating all the place till the bystanders are forced to shade their eyes from the heavenly splendor. But all this is wide of the reality. Such glories as the simple shepherds saw were seen only by the eye of faith; and all which met their gaze was a peasant of Galilee, already beyond the prime of life, and a young mother, of whom they could not know that she was wedded maid and virgin wife, with an Infant Child, whom, since there were none to help her, her own hands had wrapped in swaddling clothes. The light that shined in the darkness was not physical, but a spiritual beam; the Dayspring from on high, which had now visited mankind, dawned only in a few faithful and humble hearts.

And the Gospels, always truthful and bearing on every page that simplicity which is the stamp of honest narrative, indicate this fact without comment. There is in them nothing of the exuberance of marvel, and mystery, and miracle which appears alike in the Jewish imaginations about their coming

Messiah and in the apocryphal narratives about the Infant Christ. Had our Gospels been unauthentic, they, too, must inevitably have partaken of the characteristics which mark, without exception, every early fiction about the Saviour's life. To the unilluminated fancy it would have seemed incredible that the most stupendous event in the world's history should have taken place without convulsions and catastrophes.

How long the Virgin Mother and her holy Child stayed in this cave, or cattle-enclosure, we cannot tell, but probably it was not for long. The word rendered "manger" in Luke 2:7 is of very uncertain meaning, nor can we discover more about it than that it means a place where animals were fed. It is probable that the crowd in the khan would not be permanent, and common humanity would have dictated an early removal of the mother and her child to some more appropriate resting place. The Magi, as we see from Matthew, visited Mary in "the house." But on all these minor incidents the Gospels do not dwell. The fullest of them is Luke, and the singular sweetness of his narrative, its almost idyllic grace, its sweet calm tone of noble reticence, seemed clearly to indicate that he derived it, though but in fragmentary notices, from the lips of Mary herself. It is, indeed, difficult to imagine from whom else it could have come, for mothers are the natural historians of infant years; but it is interesting to find, in the actual style, that "coloring of a woman's memory and a woman's view," which we should naturally have expected in confirmation of a conjecture so obvious and so interesting. To one who was giving the reins to his imagination, the minutest incidents would have claimed a description; to Mary they would have seemed trivial and irrelevant. Others might wonder, but in her all wonder was lost in the one overwhelming revelation—the one absorbing consciousness. Of such things she could not lightly speak; "she kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." The very depth and sacredness of that reticence is the natural and probable explanation of the fact that some of the details of the Saviour's infancy are fully recorded by Luke alone.

## Chapter 2

### THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE

FOUR events only of our Lord's infancy are narrated by the Gospels—namely, the circumcision, the presentation in the Temple, the visit of the Magi and the Flight into Egypt. Of these the first two occur only in Luke, the last two only in Matthew. Yet no single particular can be pointed out in which the two narratives are necessarily contradictory. If, on other grounds, we have ample reason to accept the evidence of the Evangelists, as evidence given by witnesses of unimpeachable honesty, we have every right to believe that, to whatever cause the confessed fragmentariness of their narratives may be due, those narratives may fairly be regarded as supplementing each other. It is as dishonest to assume the existence of irreconcilable discrepancies as it is to suggest the adoption of impossible harmonies. The accurate and detailed sequence of biographical narrative from the earliest years of life was a thing wholly unknown to the Jews, and alien alike from their style and temperament. Anecdotes of infancy, incidents of childhood, indications of future greatness in boyish years are a very rare phenomenon in ancient literature. It is only since the dawn of Christianity that childhood has been surrounded by a halo of romance.

The exact order of the events which occurred before the return to Nazareth can only be a matter of uncertain conjecture. The circumcision was on the eighth day after the birth (Luke 1:59; 2:21); the purification was thirty-three days after the circumcision (Lev. 12:4); the visit of the

Magi was "when Jesus was born in Bethlehem" (Matt. 2:1); and the flight into Egypt immediately after their departure. The supposition that the return from Egypt was previous to the presentation in the Temple, though not absolutely impossible, seems most improbable. To say nothing of the fact that such a postponement would have been a violation (however necessary) of the Levitical law, it would either involve the supposition that the purification was long postponed, which seems to be contradicted by the twice-repeated expression of Luke (2:22, 39); or it supposes that forty days allowed sufficient time for the journey of the wise men from "the East," and for the flight to and return from Egypt. It involves, moreover, the extreme improbability of a return of the Holy Family to Jerusalem—a town but six miles distant from Bethlehem—within a few days after an event so frightful as the Massacre of the Innocents. Although no supposition is entirely free from the objections which necessarily arise out of our ignorance of the circumstances, it seems almost certain that the flight into Egypt, and the circumstances which led to it, did not occur till after the presentation. For forty days, therefore, the Holy Family were left in peace and obscurity, in a spot surrounded by so many scenes of interest, and hallowed by so many traditions of their family and race.

On the fortieth day after the Nativity—until which time she could not leave the house—the Virgin presented herself with her Babe for their purification in the Temple at Jerusalem. "Thus, then," says Bonaventura, "do they bring the Lord of the Temple to the Temple of the Lord." The proper offering on such occasions was yearling lamb for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin-offering; but with that beautiful tenderness, which is so marked a characteristic of the Mosaic legislation, those who were too poor for so comparatively costly an offering were allowed instead two turtledoves or two young pigeons. With this humble offering Mary presented herself to the priest. At

the same time Jesus, as being a first-born son, was presented to God, and in accordance with the law, was redeemed from the necessity of Temple service by the ordinary payment of five shekels of the sanctuary (Num. 18:15-16), amounting in value to about fifteen shilling. Of the purification and presentation no further details are given to us, but this visit to the Temple was rendered memorable by a double incident—the recognition of the Infant Saviour by Simeon and Anna.

Of Simeon we are simply told that he was a just and devout Israelite endowed with the gift of prophecy, and that having received divine intimation that his death would not take place till he had seen the Messiah, he entered under some inspired impulse into the Temple, and there, recognizing the Holy Child, took Him in his arms, and burst into that glorious song—the *Nunc Dimittis*—which for eighteen centuries has been so dear to Christian hearts. The prophecy that the Babe should be “a light to lighten the *Gentiles*,” no less than the strangeness of the circumstances, may well have caused astonishment to His parents, from whom the aged prophet did not conceal their own future sorrows—warning the Virgin Mother especially, both of the deadly opposition which that Divine Child was destined to encounter and of the national perils which should agitate the days to come.

## Chapter 3

### THE VISIT OF THE MAGI

O Jerusalem, look about thee toward the east, and behold the joy that cometh unto thee from God (Baruch 4:36).

The brief narrative of the visit of the Magi, recorded in the second chapter of Matthew, is of the deepest interest in the history of Christianity. It is, in the first place, the Epiphany, or manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. It brings the facts of the Gospel history into close connection with Jewish belief, with ancient prophecy, with secular history, and with modern science; and in doing so it furnishes us with new confirmations of our faith, derived incidentally, and therefore in the most unsuspecting manner, from indisputable and unexpected quarters.

Herod the Great, who, after a life of splendid misery and criminal success, had now sunk into the jealous decrepitude of his savage old age, was residing in his new palace on Zion, when, half maddened as he was already by the crimes of his past career, he was thrown into a fresh paroxysm of alarm and anxiety by the visit of some Eastern magi, bearing the strange intelligence that they had seen in the East the star of a new-born king of the Jews, and had come to worship him. Herod, a mere Idumean usurper, a more than suspected apostate, the detested tyrant over an unwilling people, the sacrilegious plunderer of the tomb of David—Herod, a descendant of the despised Ishmael and the hated Esau—heard the tidings with a terror and indigna-

tion which it was hard to dissimulate. The grandson of one who, as was believed, had been a mere servitor in a temple at Ascalon, and who in his youth had been carried off by Edomite brigands, he well knew how worthless were his pretensions to an historic throne which he held solely by successful adventure. But his craft equaled his cruelty, and finding that all Jerusalem shared his suspense, he summoned to his palace the leading priests and theologians of the Jews—perhaps the relics of that Sanhedrin which he had long reduced to a despicable shadow—to inquire of them where the Messiah was to be born. He received the ready and confident answer that Bethlehem was the town indicated for that honor by the prophecy of Micah. Concealing, therefore, his desperate intention, he dispatched the wise men to Bethlehem, bidding them to let him know as soon as they had found the child, that he, too, might come and do him reverence.

Before continuing the narrative, let us pause to inquire who these Eastern wanderers were, and what can be discovered respecting their mysterious mission.

The name "Magi," by which they are called in the Greek of Matthew, is perfectly vague. It meant originally a sect of Median and Persian scholars; it was subsequently applied (as in Acts 13:6) to pretended astrologers, or Oriental soothsayers. Such characters were well known to antiquity, under the name of Chaldeans, and their visits were by no means unfamiliar even to the Western nations. Diogenes Laertius reports to us a story of Aristotle, that a Syrian *mage* had predicted to Socrates that he would die a violent death; and Seneca informs us that magi, "*qui forte Athenis erant*," had visited the tomb of Plato, and had there offered incense to him as a divine being. There is nothing but a mass of confused and contradictory traditions to throw any light either on their rank, their country, their number, or their names. The tradition which makes them kings was probably founded on the prophecy of Isaiah (60:3): "and the Gentiles

shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising." The fancy they were Arabians may have risen from the fact that myrrh and frankincense are Arabian products, joined to the passage in Psalm 72:10, "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall give presents; the kings of Arabia and Saba shall bring gifts."

We are informed by Tacitus, by Suetonius, and by Josephus that there prevailed throughout the entire East at this time an intense conviction, derived from ancient prophecies, that ere long a powerful monarch would arise in Judea, and gain dominion over the world. It has, indeed, been conjectured that the Roman historians may simply be echoing an assertion, for which Josephus was in reality their sole authority; but even if we accept this uncertain supposition, there is still ample proof, both in Jewish and in pagan writings, that a guilty and weary world was dimly expecting the advent of its Deliverer. "The dew of blessing falls not on us, and our fruits have no taste," exclaimed Rabban Simeon, the son of Gamaliel; and the expression might sum up much of the literature of an age which was, as Niebuhr says, "effete with the drunkenness of crime." The splendid vaticination in the fourth Eclogue of Virgil proves the intensity of the feeling, and has long been reckoned among the "unconscious prophecies of heathendom."

There is, therefore, nothing extraordinary in the fact that these Eastern magi should have bent their steps to Jerusalem, especially if there were any circumstances to awaken in the East a more immediate conviction that this widespread expectation was on the point of fulfillment. If there were disciples of Zoroaster, they would see in the Infant King the future conqueror of Ahriman, the destined Lord of all the World. The story of their journey has indeed been set down with contemptuous confidence as a mere poetic myth; but though its actual historic verity must rest on the testimony of the Evangelist alone, there are many facts which enable



us to see that in its main outlines it involves nothing either impossible or even improbable.

Now, Matthew tells us that the cause of their expectant attitude was that they had seen the star of the Messiah in the East, and that to discover Him was the motive of their journey.

The Magi came to Bethlehem, and offered to the young child in his rude and humble resting place a reverence which we do not hear that they had paid to the usurping Edomite in his glittering palace. "And when they had opened their treasures they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." The imagination of early Christians has seen in each gift a special significance: myrrh for the human nature, gold to the king, frankincense to the divinity; or, the gold for the race of Shem, the myrrh for the race of Ham, the incense for the race of Japheth—innocent fancies, only worthy of mention because of their historic interest and their bearing on the conceptions of Christian poetry and Christian art.

## Chapter 4

### THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT, AND THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS

WHEN they had offered their gifts, the Wise Men would naturally have returned to Herod, but being warned of God in a dream, they returned to their own land another way. Neither in Scripture, nor in authentic history, nor even in early apocryphal tradition do we find any further traces of their existence; but their visit led to very memorable events.

The dream which warned them of danger may very probably have fallen in with their own doubts about the cruel and crafty tyrant who had expressed a hypocritical desire to pay his homage to the Infant King; and if, as we may suppose, they imparted to Joseph any hint as to their misgivings, he, too, would be prepared for the warning dream which bade him fly to Egypt to save the young child from Herod's jealousy.

Of the flight, and its duration, Scripture gives us no further particulars, telling us only that the Holy Family fled by night from Bethlehem, and returned when Joseph had again been assured by a dream that it would be safe to take back the Saviour to the land of His nativity. It is left to apocryphal legends, immortalized by the genius of Italian art, to tell us how, on the way, the dragons came and bowed to Him, the lions and leopards adored Him, the roses of Jericho blossomed wherever His footsteps trod, the palm trees at His command bent down to give them dates, the robbers were overawed by His majesty, and the journey was miraculously

shortened. They tell us further how, at His entrance into the country, all the idols of the land of Egypt fell from their pedestals with a sudden crash, and lay shattered and broken upon their faces, and how many wonderful cures of leprosy and demoniac possession were wrought by His word. All this wealth and prodigality of superfluous, aimless, and unmeaning miracle—arising in part from a mere craving for the supernatural—furnishes a strong contrast to the truthful simplicity of the Gospel narrative. Matthew neither tells us where the Holy Family abode in Egypt nor how long their exile continued; but ancient legends say that they remained two years absent from Palestine, and lived at Matareeh, a few miles northeast of Cairo, where a fountain was long shown of which Jesus had made the water fresh, and an ancient sycamore under which they had rested. The Evangelist alludes only to the causes of their flight and of their return, and finds in the latter a new and deeper significance for the words of the Prophet Hosea, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

The flight into Egypt led to a very memorable event. Seeing that the Wise Men had not returned to him, the alarm and jealousy of Herod assumed a still darker and more malignant aspect. He had no means of identifying the royal infant of the seed of David, and least of all would have been likely to seek for Him in the cavern stable of the village khan. But he knew that the child whom the visit of the Magi had taught him to regard as a future rival of himself or of his house was yet an infant at the breast; and as Eastern mothers usually suckle their children for two years, he issued his fell mandate to slay all the children of Bethlehem and its neighborhood "from two years old and under." Of the method by which the decree was carried out we know nothing. The children may have been slain secretly, gradually, and by various forms of murder; or, as has been generally supposed, there may have been one single hour of dreadful butchery. The decrees of tyrants like Herod

are usually involved in a deadly obscurity; they reduce the world to a torpor in which it is hardly safe to speak above a whisper. But the wild wail of anguish which rose from the mothers thus cruelly robbed of their infant children could not be hushed, and they who heard it might well imagine that Rachel, the great ancestress of their race, whose tomb stands by the roadside about a mile from Bethlehem, once more, as in the pathetic image of the prophet, mingled her voice with the mourning and lamentation of those who wept so inconsolably for their murdered little ones.

It must have been very shortly after the murder of the Innocents that Herod died. Only five days before his death he had made a frantic attempt at suicide, and had ordered the execution of his eldest son Antipater. His deathbed was accompanied by circumstances of peculiar horror, and it has been noticed that the loathsome disease of which he died is hardly mentioned in history, except in the case of men who have been rendered infamous by an atrocity of persecuting zeal. On his bed of intolerable anguish, in that splendid and luxurious palace which he had built for himself under the palms of Jericho, swollen with disease and scorched by thirst—ulcerated externally and glowing inwardly with “a soft, slow fire”—surrounded by plotting sons and plundering slaves, detesting all and detested by all—longing for death as a release from his tortures, yet dreading it as the beginning of worse terrors—stunned by remorse, yet still unslaked with murder—a horror to all around him, yet in his guilty conscience a worse terror to himself—devoured by the premature corruption of an anticipated grave—eaten of worms as though visibly smitten by the finger of God’s wrath after seventy years of successful villainy—the wretched old man, whom men had called the Great, lay in savage frenzy awaiting his last hour. As he knew that none would shed one tear for him, he determined that they should shed many for themselves, and issued an order that, under pain of death, the principal families in the kingdom and the

chiefs of the tribes should come to Jericho. They came, and then, shutting them in the hippodrome, he secretly commanded his sister Salome that at the moment of his death they should all be massacred. And so, choking as it were with blood, devising massacres in its very delirium, the soul of Herod passed forth into the night.

If the intimation of Herod's death was speedily given to Joseph, the stay in Egypt must have been too short to influence in any way the human development of our Lord. This may perhaps be the reason why Luke passes it over in silence.

It seems to have been the first intention of Joseph to fix his home in Bethlehem. It was the city of his ancestors, and was hallowed by many beautiful and heroic associations. It would have been easy to find a living there by a trade which must almost anywhere have supplied the simple wants of a peasant family. It is true that an Oriental rarely leaves his home, but when he has been compelled by circumstances to do so, he finds it comparatively easy to settle elsewhere. Having once been summoned to Bethlehem, Joseph might find a powerful attraction in the vicinity of the little town to Jerusalem; and the more so since it had recently been the scene of such memorable circumstances. But, on his way, he was met by the news that Archelaus ruled in the room of his father Herod. The people would only too gladly have got rid of the whole Idumean race; at the worst they would have preferred Antipas to Archelaus, who, though younger than Antipas, was the heir nominated by the last will of his father; and as though anxious to show that he was the true son of that father, Archelaus, even before his inheritance had been confirmed by Roman authority, "had," as Josephus scornfully remarks, "given to his subjects a specimen of his future virtue, by ordering a slaughter of 3,000 of his own countrymen at the Temple." It was clear that under such a government there could be neither hope nor safety; and Joseph, obedient once more to an intimation of

God's will, seeking once more the original home of himself and Mary, "turned aside into the parts of Galilee," where, in remote obscurity, sheltered by poverty and insignificance, the Holy Family might live secure under the sway of another son of Herod—the equally unscrupulous but more indolent and indifferent Antipas.

## Chapter 5

### THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS

NAZARETH is the village where the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind, spent nearly thirty years of His mortal life. It was, in fact, His home, His native village for all but three or four years of His life on earth; the village which lent its then ignominious name to the scornful title written upon His cross; the village from which He did not disdain to draw His appellation when He spake in vision to the persecuting Saul.

What was His manner of life during those thirty years? It is a question which the Christian cannot help asking in deep reverence, and with yearning love; but the words in which the Gospels answer it are very calm and very few.

Of the four Evangelists, John, the beloved disciple, and Mark, the friend and "son" of Peter, pass over these thirty years in absolute, unbroken silence. Matthew devotes one chapter to the visit of the Magi, and the flight into Egypt, and then proceeds to the preaching of the Baptist. Luke alone, after describing the incidents which marked the presentation in the Temple, preserves for us one inestimable anecdote of the Saviour's boyhood, and one inestimable verse descriptive of His growth till He was twelve years old. And that verse contains nothing for the gratification of our curiosity; it furnishes us with no details of life, no incidents of adventure; it tells us only how, in a sweet and holy childhood, "the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with

wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him." To this period of His life, too, we may apply the subsequent verse, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." His development was a strictly human development. He did not come into the world endowed with infinite knowledge but, as Luke tells us, "He gradually advanced in wisdom." He was not clothed with infinite power, but experienced the weaknesses and imperfections of human infancy. He grew as other children grow, only in a childhood of stainless and sinless beauty—"as the flower of roses in the spring of the year, and as lilies by the waters."

There is, then, for the most part a deep silence in the Evangelists respecting this period; but what eloquence in their silence! May we not find in their very reticence a wisdom and an instruction more profound than if they had filled many volumes with minor details?

In the first place, we may see in this their silence a signal and striking confirmation of their faithfulness. We may learn from it that they desired to tell the simple truth, and not to construct an astonishing or plausible narrative. That Christ should have passed thirty years of His brief life in the deep obscurity of a provincial village; that He should have been brought up not only in a conquered land, but in its most despised province; not only in a despised province, but in its most disregarded valley; that during all those thirty years the ineffable brightness of His divine nature should have tabernacled among us, "in a tent like ours, and of the same material," unnoticed and unknown; that during those long years there should have been no flash of splendid circumstance, no outburst of amazing miracle, no "sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies" to announce, and reveal, and glorify the coming King—this is not what we should have expected—not what *anyone* would have been likely to imagine or to invent.

We should not have expected it, but it *was* so; and there-



fore the Evangelists leave it so; and the very fact of its contradicting all that we should have imagined is an additional proof that so it must have been. An additional proof, because the Evangelists must inevitably have been—as, indeed, we know that they *were*—actuated by the same *a priori* anticipations as ourselves; and had there been any glorious circumstances attending the boyhood of our Lord, they, as honest witnesses, would certainly have told us of them; and had they *not* been honest witnesses, they would—if none such occurred in reality—have most certainly invented them. But man's ways are not as God's ways; and because the truth which, by their very silence, the Evangelists record, is a revelation to us of the ways of God, and not of man, therefore it contradicts what we should have invented; it disappoints what, without further enlightenment, we should have desired. But, on the other hand, it fulfills the ideal of ancient prophecy. "He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground"; and it is in accordance with subsequent allusion, "He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant."

Yet I am not sure that the sacredness of the evangelic silence is not rudely impaired even by so simple a fancy as this: for it was in utter stillness, in prayerfulness, in the quiet round of daily duties—like Moses in the wilderness, like David among the sheepfolds, like Elijah among the tents of the Bedouin, like Jeremiah in his quiet home at Anathoth, like Amos in the sycamore groves of Tekoa—that the boy Jesus prepared Himself, amid a hallowed obscurity, for His mighty work on earth. His outward life was the life of all those of His age, and station, and place of birth. He lived as lived the other children of peasant parents in that quiet town, and in great measure as they live now. He who has seen the children of Nazareth in their red caftans, and bright tunics of silk or cloth, girded with a many-colored sash, and sometimes covered with a loose outer jacket of white or blue—he who has watched their noisy and merry

games, and heard their ringing laughter as they wander about the hills of their little native vale, or play in bands on the hillside beside their sweet and abundant fountain—may perhaps form some conception of how Jesus looked and played when He, too, was a child. And the traveler who has followed any of those children—as I have done—to their simple homes, and seen the scanty furniture, the plain but sweet and wholesome food, the uneventful, happy patriarchal life, may form a vivid conception of the manner in which Jesus lived. Nothing can be plainer than those homes, with the doves sunning themselves on the white roofs, and the vines wreathing about them. The mats, or carpets, are laid loose along the walls; shoes and sandals are taken off at the threshold; from the center hangs a lamp which forms the only ornament of the room; in some recess in the wall is placed the wooden chest, painted with bright colors, which contains the books or other possessions of the family; on a ledge that runs round the wall, within easy reach, are neatly rolled up the gay-colored quilts, which serve as beds, and on the same ledge are ranged the earthen vessels for daily use; near the door stand the large common water-jars of red clay with a few twigs and green leaves—often of aromatic shrubs—thrust into their orifices to keep the water cool. At mealtime a painted wooden stool is placed in the center of the apartment, a large tray is put upon it, and in the middle of the tray stands the dish of rice and meat, or *libban*, or stewed fruits, from which all help themselves in common. Both before and after the meal the servant, or the youngest member of the family, pours water over the hands from a brazen ewer into a brazen bowl. So quiet, so simple, so humble, so uneventful was the outward life of the family of Nazareth.

Matthew tells us that in the settlement of the Holy Family at Nazareth was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene." It is well known that no such passage occurs in any extant prophecy. If the

name implied a contemptuous dislike—as may be inferred from the proverbial question of Nathanael, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”—then Matthew may be summing up in that expression the various prophecies so little understood by his nation, which pointed to the Messiah as the man of sorrows. And certainly to this day “Nazarene” has continued to be a term of contempt. The Talmudists always speak of Jesus as “Ha-nozeri”; Julian is said to have expressly decreed that Christians should be called by the less honorable appellation of Galileans; and to this day the Christians of Palestine are known by no other title than Nusara. But the explanation which refers Matthew’s allusion to those passages of prophecy in which Christ is called “the Branch” (*netser*) seems far more probable. The village may have derived this name from no other circumstance than its abundant foliage; but the Old Testament is full of proofs that the Hebrews—who in philology accepted the views of the Analogists—attached immense and mystical importance to mere resemblances in the sound of words. To mention but one single instance, the first chapter of the Prophet Micah turns almost entirely on such merely external similarities in what, for lack of a better term, I can only call the physiological quantity of sounds. Matthew, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, would without any hesitation have seen a prophetic fitness in Christ’s residence at this town of Galilee, because its name recalled the title by which He was addressed in the prophecy of Isaiah.

“Shall the Christ come out of Galilee?” asked the wondering people. “Search and look!” said the rabbis to Nicodemus, “for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet” (John 7:41, 52). It would not have needed very deep searching or looking to find that these words were ignorant or false; for not to speak of Barak the deliverer, and Elon the judge, and Anna the prophetess, three, if not four, of the prophets—and those prophets of the highest eminence, Jonah, Elijah, Hosea, and Nahum—had been born, or had exercised much

of their ministry, in the precincts of Galilee. And in spite of the supercilious contempt with which it was regarded, the little town of Nazareth, situated as it was in a healthy and secluded valley, yet close upon the confines of great nations, and in the center of a mixed population, was eminently fitted to be the home of our Saviour's childhood, the scene of that quiet growth "in wisdom, and stature, and favor with God and man."

## Chapter 6

### JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

THE age of twelve years was a critical age for a Jewish boy. It was the age at which, according to Jewish legend, Moses had left the house of Pharaoh's daughter; and Samuel had heard the Voice which summoned him to the prophetic office; and Solomon had given the judgment which first revealed his possession of wisdom; and Josiah had first dreamed of his great reform. At this age a boy of whatever rank was obliged, by the injunction of the rabbis and the custom of his nation, to learn a trade for his own support. At this age he was so far emancipated from parental authority that his parents could no longer sell him as a slave. At this age he became a *ben hat-torah*, or "son of the Law." Up to this age he was called *katon*, or "little"; henceforth he was *gadol*, or "grown up," and was treated more as a man; henceforth, too, he began to wear the *tephillin*, or "phylacteries," and was presented by his father in the synagogue on a Sabbath, which was called from this circumstance the *shabbath tephillin*. Nay, more, according to one rabbinical treatise, the *Sepher Gilgulim*, up to this age a boy only possessed the *nephesh*, or animal life; but henceforth he began to acquire the *ruach*, or spirit, which, if his life were virtuous, would develop, at the age of twenty, into the *nishema*, or reasonable soul.

This period, too — the completion of the twelfth year — formed a decisive epoch in a Jewish boy's education. Ac-

according to Juda Ben Tema, at five he was to study the Scriptures (Mikra), at ten the Mishna, at thirteen the Talmud; at eighteen he was to marry, at twenty to acquire riches, at thirty strength, at forty prudence, and so on to the end. Nor must we forget, in considering this narrative, that the Hebrew race, and, indeed, Orientals generally, develop with a precocity unknown among ourselves, and that boys of this age (as we learn from Josephus) could and did fight in battle, and that, to the great detriment of the race, it is, to this day, regarded as a marriageable age among the Jews of Palestine and Asia Minor.

Now, it was the custom of the parents of our Lord to visit Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. Women were, indeed, not mentioned in the law which required the annual presence of all males at the three great yearly feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles; but Mary, in pious observance of the rule recommended by Hillel, accompanied her husband every year, and on this occasion they took with them the boy Jesus, who was beginning to be of an age to assume the responsibilities of the Law. We can easily imagine how powerful must have been the influence upon His human development of this break in the still secluded life; of this glimpse into the great outer world; of this journey through a land of which every hill and every village teemed with sacred memories; of this first visit to that Temple of His Father which was associated with so many mighty events in the story of the kings His ancestors and the prophets His forerunners.

The numbers who flocked to the Passover from every region of the East might be counted by tens of thousands. There were far more than the city could by any possibility accommodate; and then, as now at Eastertime, vast numbers of the pilgrims reared for themselves the little succoth—booths of mat, and wicker-work, and interwoven leaves, which provided them with a sufficient shelter for all their wants. The feast lasted for a week — a week, probably, of deep

happiness and strong religious emotion; and then, with their mules, and horses, and asses, and camels, the vast caravan would clear away their temporary dwelling places and start on the homeward journey. The road was enlivened by mirth and music. They often beguiled the tedium of travel with the sound of drums and timbrels, and paused to refresh themselves with dates, or melons, or cucumbers, and water drawn in skins and waterpots from every springing well and running stream.

The apocryphal legend says that on the journey from Jerusalem the boy Jesus left the caravan and returned to the Holy City. With far greater truth and simplicity Luke informs us that—absorbed in all probability in the rush of new and elevating emotions—He “tarried behind in Jerusalem.” A day elapsed before the parents discovered their loss; this they would not do until they arrived at the place of evening rendezvous, and all day long they would be free from all anxiety, supposing that the boy was with some other group of friends or relatives in that long caravan. But when evening came, and their diligent inquiries led to no trace of Him, they would learn the bitter fact that He was altogether missing from the band of returning pilgrims. The next day, in alarm and anguish—perhaps, too, with some sense of self-reproach that they had not been more faithful to their sacred charge—they retraced their steps to Jerusalem.

Neither on that day, nor during the night, nor throughout a considerable part of the third day, did they discover Him, till at last they found Him in the place which, strangely enough, seems to have been the last where they searched for Him—in the Temple, “sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions; and all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.”

The last expression, no less than the entire context, and all that we know of the character of Jesus and the nature of the circumstances, shows that the boy was there to inquire and

learn—not as the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy represents it, to cross-examine the doctors “each in turn”—not to expound the number of the spheres and celestial bodies, and their natures and operations—still less to “explain physics and metaphysics, hyperphysics and hypophysics.” All these are but the Apollinarian fictions of those who preferred their heretical and pseudo-reverential fancies of what was fitting, to the simple truthfulness with which the Evangelist lets us see that Jesus, like other children, grew up in gradual knowledge, consistently with the natural course of human development. He was there, as Luke shows us, in all humility and reverence to His elders, as an eager-hearted and gifted learner, whose enthusiasm kindled their admiration, and whose bearing won their esteem and love. All tinge of arrogance and forwardness was utterly alien to His character, which, from His sweet childhood upward, was meek and lowly of heart. Among those present may have been—white with the snows of well-nigh a hundred years—the great Hillel, one of the founders of the Masorah, whom the Jews almost reverence as a second Moses; and his son the Rabban Simeon, who thought so highly of silence; and his grandson, the refined and liberal Gamaliel; and Shammai, his great rival, a teacher who numbered a still vaster host of disciples; and Hanan, or Annas, son of Seth, His future judge; and Boethus, the father-in-law of Herod; and Babha Ben Butah, whose eyes Herod had put out; and Nechaniah Ben Hiskanah, so celebrated for his victorious prayers; and Johanan Ben Zacchai, who predicted the destruction of the Temple; and the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea; and the timid but earnest Nicodemus; and the youthful Jonathan Ben Uzziel, who subsequently wrote the celebrated Chaldee paraphrase, and was held by his contemporaries in boundless honor. But though none of these might conjecture who was before them—and though hardly one of them lived to believe on Him, and some to oppose Him in years to come—which of them all would not have been charmed and astonished at a glorious



and noble-hearted boy, in all the early beauty of His life, who, though He had never learned in the schools of the rabbis, yet showed so marvelous a wisdom, and so deep a knowledge in all things divine?

Here then—perhaps in the famous *Lishcath haggazzith*, or “Hall of Squares”—perhaps in the *Chanujoth*, or “Halls of Purchase,” or in one of the spacious chambers assigned to purposes of teaching which adjoined the Court of the Gentiles—seated, but doubtless at the feet of His teachers, on the many-colored mosaic which formed the floor, Joseph and Mary found the Divine Boy. Filled with that almost adoring spirit of reverence for the great priests and religious teachers of their day which characterized at this period the simple and pious Galileans, they were awe-struck to find Him, calm and happy, in so august a presence. They might, indeed, have known that He was wiser than His teachers, and transcendently more great; but hitherto they had only known Him as the silent, sweet, obedient child, and perhaps the incessant contact of daily life had blunted the sense of His awful origin. Yet it is Mary, not Joseph, who alone ventures to address Him in the language of tender reproach. “My child, why dost Thou treat us thus? See, Thy father and I were seeking Thee with aching hearts.” And then follows His answer, so touching in its innocent simplicity, so unfathomable in its depth of consciousness, so infinitely memorable as furnishing us with the first recorded words of the Lord Jesus:

“Why is it that ye were seeking me? Did ye not know that I must be about my Father’s business?”

This answer, so divinely natural, so sublimely noble, bears upon itself the certain stamp of authenticity. The conflict of thoughts which it implies; the half-vexed astonishment which it expresses that they should so little understand Him; the perfect dignity, and yet the perfect humility which it combines, lie wholly beyond the possibility of invention. It is in accordance, too, with all His ministry—in accordance

with that utterance to the tempter, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," and with that quiet answer to the disciples by the well of Samaria, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." Mary had said unto Him, "Thy father," but in His reply He recognizes, and henceforth He knows, *no* father except His Father in heaven. In the "Did ye not *know*," He delicately recalls to them the fading memory of all that they *did* know; and in that "I must," He lays down the sacred law of self-sacrifice by which He was to walk, even unto the death upon the cross.

"And they understood not the saying which He spake unto them." They—even they—even the old man who had protected His infancy, and the mother who knew the awful secret of His birth—understood not, that is, not in their *deeper* sense, the significance of those quiet words. Strange and mournful commentary on the first recorded utterance of the youthful Saviour, spoken to those who were nearest and dearest to Him on earth! Strange, but mournfully prophetic of all His life: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

And yet, though the consciousness of His divine parentage was thus clearly present in His mind—though one ray from the glory of His hidden majesty had thus unmistakably flashed forth—in all dutiful simplicity and holy obedience "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them."

## Chapter 7

### THE HOME AT NAZARETH

BUT if of the first twelve years of His human life we have only this single anecdote, of the next eighteen years of His life we possess no record whatever save such as is implied in a single word.

That word occurs in Mark 6:3: "Is not this *the carpenter?*"

We may be indeed thankful that the word remains, for it is full of meaning, and has exercised a very noble and blessed influence over the fortunes of mankind. It has tended to console and sanctify the estate of poverty; to ennoble the duty of labor; to elevate the entire conception of manhood, as of a condition which in itself alone, and apart from every adventitious circumstance, has its own grandeur and dignity in the sight of God.

1. It shows, for instance, that not only during the three years of His ministry, but throughout the whole of His life, our Lord was poor. In the cities the carpenters would be Greeks, and skilled workmen: the carpenter of a provincial village—and, if tradition be true, Joseph was "not very skillful"—can only have held a very humble position and secured a very moderate competence. In all ages there has been an exaggerated desire for wealth; an exaggerated admiration for those who possess it; an exaggerated belief of its influence in producing or increasing the happiness of life; and from these errors a flood of cares and jealousies and meannesses have devastated the life of man. And therefore Jesus chose voluntarily "the low estate of the poor"—

not, indeed, an absorbing, degrading, grinding poverty, which is always rare, and almost always remediable, but that commonest lot of honest poverty, which, though it necessitates self-denial, can provide with ease for all the necessities of simple life. The Idumean dynasty that had usurped the throne of David might indulge in the gilded vices of a corrupt Hellenism, and display the gorgeous gluttonies of a decaying civilization; but He who came to be the Friend and the Saviour, no less than the King of All, sanctioned the purer, better, simpler traditions and customs of His nation, and chose the condition in which the vast majority of mankind have ever, and must ever live.

2. Again, there has ever been, in the unenlightened mind, a love of idleness; a tendency to regard it as a stamp of aristocracy; a desire to delegate labor to the lower and weaker, and to brand it with the stigma of inferiority and contempt. But our Lord wished to show that labor is a pure and a noble thing; it is the salt of life; it is the girdle of manliness; it saves the body from effeminate languor, and the soul from polluting thoughts. And therefore Christ labored, working with His own hands, and fashioned ploughs and yokes for those who needed them.

3. A relative insignificance, then, is, and must be, the destined lot of the immense majority, and many a man might hence be led to think that since he fills so small a space—since, for the vast masses of mankind, he is of as little importance as the ephemerid which buzzes out its little hour in the summer noon—there is nothing better than to eat, and drink, and die. But Christ came to convince us that a relative insignificance may be an absolute importance. He came to teach that continual excitement, prominent action, distinguished service, brilliant success, are no essential elements of true and noble life, and that myriads of the beloved of God are to be found among the insignificant and the obscure. The calmest and most unknown lot is often the happiest, and we may safely infer that these years in the home and trade

of the carpenter of Nazareth were happy years in our Saviour's life. Often, even in His later days, it is clear that His words are the words of one who rejoiced in spirit; they are words which seem to flow from the full river of an abounding happiness. But what must that happiness have been in those earlier days, before the storms of righteous anger had agitated His unruffled soul or His heart burned hot with terrible indignation against the sin and hypocrisies of men?

4. And while they were occupied manually, we have positive evidence that these years were not neglected intellectually. No importance can be attached to the clumsy stories of the Apocryphal Gospels, but it is possible that some religious and simple instruction may have been given to the little Nazarenes by the *sopherim*, or other attendants of the synagogue; and here our Lord, who was made like unto us in all things, may have learnt, as other children learnt, the elements of human learning. But it is, perhaps, more probable that Jesus received His early teaching at home, and in accordance with the injunctions of the Law (Deut. 11:19), from His father. He would, at any rate, have often heard in the daily prayers of the synagogue all which the elders of the place could teach respecting the Law and the Prophets. That He had not been to Jerusalem for purposes of instruction, and had not frequented any of the schools of the rabbis, is certain from the indignant questions of jealous enemies, "From whence hath this man these things?" "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

5. And this testimony of His enemies furnishes us with a convincing and fortunate proof that His teaching was not, as some would insinuate, a mere eclectic system borrowed from the various sects and teachers of His times. It is certain that He was never enrolled among the scholars of those scribes who made it their main business to teach the traditions of the fathers. Although schools in great towns had been founded eighty years before, by Simeon Ben Shatach,

yet there could have been no Beth Midrash or Beth Rabban, no "vineyard" or "array" at despised and simple Nazareth. And from whom could Jesus have borrowed? From Oriental gymnosophists or Greek philosophers? No one, in these days, ventures to advance so wild a proposition. From the Pharisees? The very foundations of their system, the very idea of their religion, was irreconcilably alien from all that He revealed. From the Sadducees? Their epicurean insouciance, their "expediency" politics, their shallow rationalism, their polished sloth were even more repugnant to true Christianity than they were to sincere Judaism. From the Essenes? They were an exclusive, ascetic, and isolated community, with whose discouragement of marriage, and withdrawal from action, the Gospels have no sympathy, and to whom our Lord never alluded, unless it be in those passages where He reprobates those who abstain from anointing themselves when they fast, and who hide their candle under a bushel. From Philo and the Alexandrian Jews? Philo was indeed a good man, and a great thinker, and a contemporary of Christ; but (even if his name had ever been heard—which is exceedingly doubtful—in so remote a region as Galilee) it would be impossible, among the world's philosophies, to choose any system less like the doctrines which Jesus taught, than the mystic theosophy and allegorizing extravagance of that "sea of abstractions" which lies congealed in his writings. From Hillel and Shammai? We know but little of them; but although, in one or two passages of the Gospels, there may be a conceivable allusion to the disputes which agitated their schools, or to one or two of the best and truest maxims which originated in them, such allusions, on the one hand, involve no more than belongs to the common stock of truth taught by the Spirit of God to men in every age; and, on the other hand, the system which Shammai and Hillel taught was that oral tradition, that dull dead Levitical ritualism, at once arrogant and impotent, at once frivolous and unoriginal, which Jesus both denounced and overthrew. The

schools in which Jesus learnt were not the schools of the scribes, but the school of holy obedience, of sweet contentment, of unalloyed simplicity, of stainless purity, of cheerful toil. The lore in which He studied was not the lore of rabbinism, in which to find one just or noble thought we must wade through masses of puerile fancy and cabbalistic folly, but the Books of God without Him, in Scripture, in nature, and in life; and the Book of God within Him, written on the fleshly tables of the heart.

The education of a Jewish boy of the humbler classes was almost solely scriptural and moral, and his parents were, as a rule, his sole teachers. We can hardly doubt that the child Jesus was taught by Joseph and Mary to read the Shema (Deut. 6:4), and the Hallel (Ps. 114-118), and the simpler parts of those holy books, on whose pages His divine wisdom was hereafter to pour such floods of light.

But He had evidently received a further culture than this.

The art of writing is by no means commonly known, even in these days, in the East; but more than one allusion to the form of the Hebrew letters, no less than the stooping to write with His finger on the ground, show that our Lord could write. That His knowledge of the sacred writings was deep and extensive—that, in fact, He must almost have known them by heart—is clear, not only from His direct quotations, but also from the numerous allusions which He made to the Law and to the Hagiographa, as well as to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Joel, Hosea, Micah, Zechariah, Malachi, and, above all, to the book of Psalms. It is probable, though not certain, that He was acquainted with the uncanonical Jewish books. This profound and ready knowledge of the Scriptures gave more point to the half-indignant question, so often repeated, "Have ye not read?" The language which our Lord commonly spoke was Aramaic; and at that period Hebrew was completely a dead language, known only to the more educated, and only to be acquired by labor; yet it is clear that Jesus was acquainted with it, for some of His scriptural

quotations directly refer to the Hebrew original. Greek, too, He must have known, for it was currently spoken in towns so near His home as Sepphoris, Caesarea, and Tiberias. Greek was, indeed, the common medium of intercourse, and without it Jesus could have had no conversation with strangers—with the centurion, for instance, whose servant He healed, or with Pilate, or with the Greeks who desired an interview with Him in the last week of His life. Whether He was acquainted with Latin is much more doubtful, though not impossible. The Romans in Judea must by this time have been very numerous, and Latin was inscribed upon the coins in ordinary use. But to whatever extent He may have known these languages, it is clear that they exercised little or no influence on His human development, nor is there in all His teaching a single indisputable allusion to the literature, philosophy, or history of Greece or Rome. And that Jesus habitually thought in that Syriac which was His native tongue may be conjectured, without improbability, from some curious plays on words which are lost in the Greek of the Gospels, but which would have given point and beauty to some of His utterances, as spoken in their original tongue.

6. But whatever the boy Jesus may have learned as child or boy in the house of His mother, or in the school of the synagogue, we know that His best teaching was derived from immediate insight into His Father's will. In the depths of His inmost consciousness did that voice of God, which spake to the father of our race as he walked in the cool evening under the palms of Paradise, commune—more plainly, by far—with Him. He heard it in every sound of nature, in every occupation of life, in every interspace of solitary thought. His human life was "an ephod on which was inscribed the one word *God*." Written on His inmost spirit, written on His most trivial experiences, written in sunbeams, written in the light of stars, He read everywhere His Father's name. The calm, untroubled seclusion of the happy valley, with its green fields and glorious scenery, was eminently



conducive to a life of spiritual communion; and we know how from its very incident—the games of its children, the buying and selling in its little market place, the springing of its perennial fountain, the glory of its mountain lilies in their transitory loveliness, the hoarse cry in their wind-rocked nest of the raven's callow brood—He drew food for moral illustration and spiritual thought.

Nor must we lose sight of the fact that it was in these silent, unrecorded years that a great part of His work was done. He was not only "girding His sword upon His thigh," but also wielding it in that warfare which has no discharge. That noiseless battle, in which no clash of weapons sounds, but in which the combatants against us are none the less terrible because they are not seen, went on through all the years of His redeeming obedience. In these years He "began to do" long before He "began to teach." They were the years of sinless childhood, a sinless boyhood, a sinless youth, a sinless manhood, spent in that humility, toil, obscurity, submission, contentment, prayer, to make them an eternal example to all our race. We cannot imitate Him in the occupations of His ministry, nor can we even remotely reproduce in our own experience the external circumstances of His life during those three crowning years. But the vast majority of us are placed, by God's own appointment, amid those quiet duties of a commonplace and uneventful routine which are most closely analogous to the thirty years of His retirement; it was during these years that His life is for us the main example of how we ought to live. "Take notice here," says the saintly Bonaventura, "that His doing nothing wonderful was in itself a kind of wonder. For His whole life is a mystery; and as there was power in His actions, so was there power in His silence, in His inactivity, and in His retirement. This sovereign Master, who was to teach all virtues, and to point out the way of life, began from His youth up, by sanctifying in His own person the practice

of the virtuous life He came to teach, but in a wondrous, unfathomable, and, till then, unheard-of manner."

7. It has been implied that there are but two spots in Palestine where we may feel an absolute moral certainty that the feet of Christ have trod, namely, the well-side at Shechem, and the turning of that road from Bethany over the Mount of Olives from which Jerusalem first bursts upon the view. But to these I would add at least another—the summit of the hill on which Nazareth is built. That summit is now unhappily marked, not by any Christian monument, but by the wretched, ruinous, crumbling *wely* of some obscure Mohammedan saint. Certainly there is no child of ten years old in Nazareth now, however dull and unimpressible he may be, who has not often wandered up to it; and certainly there could have been no boy at Nazareth in olden days who had not followed the common instinct of humanity by climbing up those thymy hill-slopes to the lovely and easily accessible spot which gives a view of the world beyond. The hill rises six hundred feet above the level of the sea. Four or five hundred feet below lies the happy valley. The view from this spot would in any country be regarded as extraordinarily rich and lovely; but it receives a yet more indescribable charm from our belief that here, with His feet among the mountain flowers, and the soft breeze lifting the hair from His temples, Jesus must often have watched the eagles poised in the cloudless blue, and have gazed upwards as He heard overhead the rushing plumes of the long line of pelicans, as they winged their way from the streams of Kishon to the Lake of Galilee.

The scene which lay there outspread before the eyes of the youthful Jesus was indeed a central spot in the world which He came to save. It was in the heart of the Land of Israel, and yet—separated from it only by a narrow boundary of hills and streams—Phoenicia, Syria, Arabia, Babylonia, and Egypt lay close at hand. The Isles of the Gentiles, and all the glorious regions of Europe, were al-

most visible over the shining waters of that Western sea. The standards of Rome were planted on the plain before Him; the language of Greece was spoken in the towns below. And however peaceful it then might look, green as a pavement of emeralds, rich with its gleams of vivid sunlight, and the purpling shadows which floated over it from the clouds of the clouds of the latter rain, it had been for centuries a battlefield of nations. Pharaohs and Ptolemies, Emirs and Arsacids, Judges and Consuls had all contended for the mastery of that smiling tract. It had glittered with the lances of the Amalekites; it had trembled under the chariot wheels of Sesostris; it had echoed the twanging bowstrings of Sennacherib; it had been trodden by the phalanxes of Macedonia; it had clashed with the broadswords of Rome; it was destined hereafter to ring with the battle cry of the Crusaders, and thunder with the artillery of England and of France. In that Plain of Jezreel, Europe and Asia, Judaism and Heathenism, Barbarism and Civilization, the Old and the New Covenant, the history of the past and the hopes of the present, seemed all to meet. No scene of deeper significance for the destinies of humanity could possibly have arrested the youthful Saviour's gaze.

## Chapter 8

### THE BAPTISM OF JOHN

THUS then His boyhood, and youth, and early manhood had passed away in humble submission and holy silence, and Jesus was now thirty years old. That deep lesson for all classes of men in every age, which was involved in the long toil and obscurity of those thirty years, had been taught more powerfully than mere words could teach it, and the hour for His ministry and for the great work of His redemption had now arrived. He was to be the Saviour not only by example, but also by revelation, and by death.

And already there had begun to ring that Voice in the Wilderness which was stirring the inmost heart of the nation with its cry, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

It was an age of transition, of uncertainty, of doubt. In the growth of general corruption, in the wreck of sacred institutions, in those dense clouds which were gathering more and more darkly on the political horizon, it must have seemed to many a pious Jew as if the fountains of the great deep were again being broken up. Already the scepter had departed from his race; already its high-priesthood was contemptuously tampered with by Idumean tetrarchs or Roman procurators; already the chief influence over his degraded Sanhedrin was in the hands of subtle Herodians or wily Sadducees. It seemed as if nothing were left for his consolation but an increased fidelity to Mosaic institutions, and

a deepening intensity of Messianic hopes. At an epoch so troubled, and so restless — when old things were rapidly passing away, and the new continued unrevealed — it might almost seem excusable for a Pharisee to watch for every opportunity of revolution; and still more excusable for an Essene to embrace a life of celibacy, and retire from the society of man. There was a general expectation of that “wrath to come,” which was to be the birth-throe of the coming kingdom—the darkness deepest before the dawn. The world had grown old, and the dotage of its paganism was marked by hideous excesses. Atheism in belief was followed, as among nations it has always been, by degradation of morals. Iniquity seemed to have run its course to the very farthest goal. Philosophy had abrogated its boasted functions except for the favored few. Crime was universal, and there was no known remedy for the horror and ruin which it was causing in a thousand hearts. Remorse itself seemed to be exhausted, so that men were “past feeling.” There was a callosity of heart, a petrifying of the moral sense, which even those who suffered from it felt to be abnormal and portentous. Even the heathen world felt that “the fullness of the time” had come.

The nature of John the Baptist was full of impetuosity and fire. The long struggle which had given him so powerful a mastery over himself — which had made him content with self-abliteration before the presence of his Lord—which had inspired him with fearlessness in the face of danger, and humility in the midst of applause—had left its traces in the stern character, and aspect, and teaching of the man. If he had won peace in the long prayer and penitence of his life in the wilderness, it was not the spontaneous peace of a placid and holy soul. The victory he had won was still encumbered with traces of the battle; the calm he had attained still echoed with the distant mutter of the storm. His very teaching reflected the imagery of the wilderness—the rock, the serpent, the barren trees. “In his

manifestation and agency," it has been said, "he was like a burning torch; his public life was quite an earthquake—the whole man was a sermon; he might well call himself a voice—the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord.'"

While he was musing the fire burned, and at the last he spake with his tongue. Almost from boyhood he had been a voluntary eremite. In solitude he had learnt things unspeakable; there the unseen world had become to him a reality; there his spirit had caught "a touch of phantasy and flame." Communing with his own great lonely heart—communing with the high thoughts of that long line of prophets, his predecessors to a rebellious people—communing with the utterances that came to him from the voices of the mountain and the sea—he had learnt a deeper lore than he could have ever learnt at Hillel's or Shammai's feet. In the tropic noonday of that deep Jordan valley, where the air seems to be full of a subtle and quivering flame—in listening to the howl of the wild beasts in the long night, under the luster of stars "that seemed to hang like balls of fire in a purple sky"—in wandering by the sluggish cobalt-colored waters of that dead and accursed lake, until before his eyes, dazzled by the saline efflorescence of the shore strewn with its wrecks of death, the ghosts of the guilty seemed to start out of the sulphurous ashes under which they were submerged—he had learnt a language, he had received a revelation, not vouchsafed to ordinary men—attained, not in the schools of the rabbis, but in the school of solitude, in the school of God.

It became widely rumored that, in the wilderness of Judea, lived one whose burning words it was worth while to hear; one who recalled Isaiah by his expressions, Elijah by his life. A Tiberius was polluting by his infamies the throne of the Empire; a Pontius Pilate with his insolences, cruelties, extortions, massacres was maddening a fanatic people; Herod Antipas was exhibiting to facile learners the example of cal-

culated apostasy and reckless lust; Caiaphus and Annas were dividing the functions of a priesthood which they disgraced. Yet the talk of the new prophet was not of political circumstances such as these; the lessons he had to teach were deeper and more universal in their moral and social significance. Whatever might be the class who flocked to his stern solitude, his teaching was intensely practical, painfully heart-searching, fearlessly downright. And so Pharisee and Sadducee, scribe and soldier, priest and publican, all thronged to listen to his words. The place where he preached was that wild range of uncultivated and untenanted wilderness which stretches southward from Jericho and the fords of Jordan to the shores of the Dead Sea. The cliffs that overhung the narrow defile which led from Jerusalem to Jericho were the haunt of dangerous robbers; the wild beasts and the crocodiles were not yet extinct in the reed-beds that marked the swellings of Jordan; yet from every quarter of the country—from priestly Hebron, from holy Jerusalem, from smiling Galilee—they came streaming forth, to catch the accents of this strange voice. And the words of that voice were like a hammer to dash in pieces the flintiest heart, like a flame to pierce into the most hidden thoughts. Without a shadow of euphemism, without an accent of subservience, without a tremor of hesitation, he rebuked the tax-gatherers for their extortionateness; the soldiers for their violence, unfairness, and discontent; the wealthy Sadducees, and stately Pharisees, for a formalism and falsity which made them vipers of a viperous brood. The whole people he warned that their cherished privileges were worse than valueless if, without repentances, they regarded them as a protection against the wrath to come. They prided themselves upon their high descent; but God, as He had created Adam out of the earth, so even out of those flints upon the strand of Jordan was able to raise up children unto Abraham. They listened with accusing consciences and stricken hearts; and since he had chosen baptism as his symbol of their puri-

fication, "they were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." Even those who did not submit to his baptism were yet "willing for a season to rejoice in his light."

But he had another and stranger message — a message sterner, yet more hopeful — to deliver; for himself he would claim no authority save as the forerunner of another; for his own baptism no value, save as an initiation into the kingdom that was at hand. When the deputation from the Sanhedrin asked him who he was—when all the people were musing in their hearts whether he were the Christ or no—he never for a moment hesitated to say that he was not the Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet. He was "a voice in the wilderness," and nothing more; but after him—and this was the announcement that stirred most powerfully the hearts of men—after him was coming One who was preferred before him, for He was before him—One whose shoes's latchet he was unworthy to unloose—One who should baptize not with water, but with the Holy Ghost, and with fire — One whose fan was in His hand, and who should thoroughly purge His floor—who should gather His wheat into the garner, but burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. The hour for the sudden coming of their long-promised, long-expected Messiah was at hand. His awful presence was near them, was among them, but they knew Him not.

Thus repentance and the kingdom of heaven were the two cardinal points of his preaching, and though he did not claim the credentials of a single miracle, yet while he threatened detection to the hypocrite and destruction to the hardened, he promised also pardon to the penitent and admission into the kingdom of heaven to the pure and clean. "The two great utterances," it has been said, "which he brings from the desert, contain the two capital revelations to which all the preparation of the Gospel has been tending. Law and prophecy; denunciation of sin and promise of pardon; the flame which consumes and the light which consoles — is not this the whole of the covenant?"



To this preaching, to this baptism, in the thirtieth year of His age, came Jesus from Galilee. John was his kinsman by birth, but the circumstances of their life had entirely separated them. John, as a child in the house of the blameless priest his father, had lived at Juttah, in the far south of the tribe of Judah, and not far from Hebron; Jesus had lived in the deep seclusion of the carpenter's shop in the valley of Galilee. When he first came to the banks of the Jordan, the great forerunner, according to his own emphatic and twice repeated testimony, "knew Him not." And yet, though Jesus was not yet revealed as the Messiah to His great herald-prophet, there was something in the solemn majesty of His aspect, which at once overawed and captivated the soul of John. To others he was the uncompromising prophet; kings he could confront with rebuke; Pharisees he could unmask with indignation; but before this Presence all his lofty bearing falls. As when some unknown dread checks the flight of the eagle, and makes him settle with hushed scream and drooping plumage on the ground, so before "the royalty of inward happiness," before the purity of sinless life, the wild prophet of the desert becomes like a submissive and timid child. The battle-brunt which legionaires could not daunt — the lofty manhood before which hierarchs trembled and princes grew pale — resigns itself, submits, adores before a moral force which is weak in every external attribute and armed only in an invisible mail. John bowed to the simple stainless manhood before he had been inspired to recognize the divine commission. He earnestly tried to forbid the purpose of Jesus. He who had received the confessions of all others, now reverently and humbly makes his own. "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?"

The answer contains the second recorded utterance of Jesus, and the first word of His public ministry—"Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

"I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean"—such seems to have been the burden of John's message to the sinners who had become sincerely penitent.

But if so, why did our Lord receive baptism at His servant's hands? His own words tell us; it was to fulfill every requirement to which God's will might seem to point (Ps. 40:7-8). He did not accept it as subsequent to a confession, for He was sinless; and in this respect, even before he recognized Him as the Christ, the Baptist clearly implied that the rite would be in His case exceptional. But He received it as ratifying the mission of His great forerunner—the last and greatest child of the Old Dispensation, the earliest herald of the New; and He also received it as the beautiful symbol of moral purification, and the humble inauguration of a ministry which came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil. His own words obviate all possibility of misconception. He does not say, "I must," but "Thus it becometh us." He does not say, "I have need to be baptized"; nor does He say, "Thou hast no need to be baptized of me," but He says, "Suffer it to be so now." This is, indeed, but the baptism of repentance; yet it may serve to prefigure the "laver of regeneration."

So Jesus descended into the waters of Jordan, and there the awful sign was given that this was indeed "He that should come." From the cloven heaven streamed the Spirit of God in a dovelike radiance that seemed to hover over His head in lambent flame, and the voice of God spake in the ears of John—"This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

## Chapter 9

### THE TEMPTATION

His human spirit filled with overpowering emotions, Jesus sought for retirement, to be alone with God, and once more to think over His mighty work. From the waters of the Jordan He was led — according to the more intense and picturesque expression of Mark, He was “driven”—by the Spirit into the wilderness.

Here Jesus, according to that graphic and pathetic touch of the second Evangelist, “was with the wild beasts.” They did not harm Him. “Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.” So had the voice of olden promise spoken; and in Christ, as in so many of His children, the promise was fulfilled. Those whose timid faith shrinks from all semblance of the miraculous need find nothing to alarm them here. It is not a natural thing that the wild creatures should attack with ferocity, or fly in terror from, their master, man.

And He was in the wilderness forty days. The number occurs again and again in Scripture, and always in connection with the facts of temptation or retribution. It is clearly a sacred and representative number, and independently of other associations, it was for forty days that Moses had stayed on Sinai, and Elijah in the wilderness. In moments of intense excitement and overwhelming thought the ordinary needs of the body seem to be modified, or even for a time superseded; and unless we are to understand Luke’s words,

"He did eat nothing," as being absolutely literal, we might suppose that Jesus found all that was necessary for His bare sustenance in such scant fruits as the desert might afford; but however that may be—and it is a question of little importance—at the end of the time He hungered. And this was the tempter's moment. The whole period had been one of moral and spiritual tension. During such high hours of excitement men will sustain, without succumbing, an almost incredible amount of labor, and soldiers will fight through a long day's battle unconscious or oblivious of their wounds. But when the enthusiasm is spent, when the exaltation dies away, when the fire burns low, when Nature, weary and overstrained, reasserts her rights—in a word, when a mighty reaction has begun, which leaves the man suffering, spiritless, exhausted—then is the hour of extreme danger, and that has been, in many a fatal instance, the moment in which a man has fallen a victim to insidious allurements or bold assault. It was at such a moment that the great battle of our Lord against the powers of evil was fought and won.

Jesus was tempted. The "Captain of our salvation" was "made perfect through sufferings." "In that He Himself *hath suffered being tempted*, He is able to succor them that are tempted." The wilderness of Jericho and the Garden of Gethsemane—these witnessed His two most grievous struggles, and in these He triumphed wholly over the worst and most awful assaults of the enemy of souls; but during no part of the days of His flesh was He free from temptation, since otherwise His life had been no true human life at all, nor would He in the same measure have left us an ensample that we should follow His steps.

The exhaustion of a long fast would have acted more powerfully on the frame of Jesus from the circumstance that with Him it was not usual. It was with a gracious purpose that He lived, not as a secluded ascetic in hard and self-inflicted pangs, but as a man with men. Nor does he ever enjoin fasting as a positive obligation, although in two

passages He more than sanctions it as a valuable aid (Matt. 6:16-18; 9:15). But, in general, we know from His own words that He came "eating and drinking," practicing not abstinence, but temperance in all things, joining in the harmless feasts and innocent assemblages of friends, so that His enemies dared to say of Him, "Behold a gluttonous man and a winebibber," as of John they said, "He hath a devil." After His fast, therefore, of forty days, however supported by solemn contemplation and supernatural aid, His hunger would be the more severe. And then it was that the tempter came; in what form—whether as a spirit of darkness or as an angel of light, whether under the disguise of a human aspect or an immaterial suggestion—we do not know and cannot pretend to say—content to follow simply the Gospel narrative, and to adopt its expressions, not with dry dogmatic assertion as to the impossibility of such expressions being in a greater or less degree allegorical, but with a view only to learn those deep moral lessons which alone concern us, and which alone are capable of an indisputable interpretation.

"If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made loaves." So spake the tempter first. Jesus was hungry, and "these stones" were perhaps those siliceous accretions which assume the exact shape of little loaves of bread, and which were represented in legend as the petrified fruits of the Cities of the Plain. The pangs of hunger work all the more powerfully when they are stimulated by the added tortures of a quick imagination; and if the conjecture be correct, then the very shape and aspect and traditional origin of these stones would give to the temptation an added force.

There can be no stronger proof of the authenticity and divine origin of this narrative than the profound subtlety and typical universality of each temptation. Not only are they wholly unlike the far cruder and simpler stories of the temptation, in all ages, of those who have been eminent

saints, but there is in them a delicacy of insight, an originality of conception, that far transcend the range of the most powerful invention.

It was a temptation to the senses—an appeal to the appetites—an impulse given to that lower nature which man shares with all the animal creation. But so far from coming in any coarse or undisguisedly sensuous form, it came shrouded in a thousand subtle veils. Israel, too, had been humbled, and suffered to hunger in the wilderness, and there, in his extreme need, God had fed him with manna, which was an angels' food and bread from heaven. Why did not the Son of God thus provide Himself with a table in the wilderness? He could do so if He liked, and why should He hesitate? If an angel had revealed to the fainting Hagar the fountain of Beer-lahairoi—if an angel had touched the famishing Elijah, and shown him food—why should He await even the ministry of angels to whom such ministry was needless, but whom, if He willed it, angels would have been so glad to serve?

How deep is the wisdom of the reply? Referring to the very lesson which the giving of the manna had been designed to teach, and quoting one of the noblest utterances of Old Testament inspiration, our Lord answered, "It standeth written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." And what a lesson lies herein for us—a lesson enforced by how great an example—that we are not to be guided by the wants of our lower nature; that we may not misuse that lower nature for the purposes of our own sustenance and enjoyment; that we are not our own, and may not do what we will with that which we imagine to be our own; that even those things which may seem lawful are yet not all expedient; that man has higher principles of life than material sustenance, as he is a higher existence than his material frame. He who thinks that we live by bread alone will make the securing of bread the chief object of his life—will determine to have

it at whatever cost—will be at once miserable and rebellious if even for a time he be stinted or deprived of it, and, because he seek no diviner food, will inevitably starve with hunger in the midst of it. But he who knows that man doth not live by bread alone, will not thus, for the sake of living, lose all that makes life dear—will, when he has done his duty, trust God to preserve with all things needful the body He has made—will seek with more earnest endeavor the bread from heaven, and that living water whereof he who drinketh shall thirst no more.

The order of the temptations is given differently by Matthew and Luke, Matthew placing second the scene on the pinnacle of the Temple, and Luke the vision of the kingdoms of the world. Both orders cannot be right, and possibly Luke may have been influenced in his arrangement by the thought that a temptation to spiritual pride and the arbitrary exercise of miraculous power was subtler and less transparent, and therefore more powerful one, than the temptation to fall down and recognize the power of evil. But the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan," recorded by both Evangelists (Luke 4:8; Matt. 4:10)—the fact that Matthew alone gives a definite sequence ("then," "again")—perhaps, too, the consideration that Matthew, as one of the apostles, is more likely to have heard the narrative immediately from the lips of Christ—give greater weight to the order which he adopts.

Jesus had conquered and rejected the first temptation by the expression of an absolute trust in God. Adapting itself, therefore, with infinite subtlety to the discovered mood of the Saviour's soul, the next temptation challenging as it were directly, and appealing immediately to, this absolute trust, claims the illustration and expression of it, not to relieve an immediate necessity, but to avert an overwhelming peril. "Then he brought Him to the Holy City, and setteth Him on the pinnacle of the Temple."

"If"—again that doubt, as though to awaken a spirit of

pride, in exercise of that miraculous display to which He is tempted—"if Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down." "Thou art in danger not self-sought; save Thyself from it, as Thou canst and mayest, and thereby prove Thy divine power and nature. Is it not written that the angels shall bear Thee up? Will not this be a splendid proof of Thy trust in God?" Thus deep and subtle was this temptation; and thus, since Jesus had appealed to Scripture, did the devil also "quote Scripture for his purpose." For there was nothing vulgar, nothing selfish, nothing sensuous in this temptation. It was an appeal not to natural appetites, but to perverted spiritual instincts. Does not the history of sects, and parties, and churches, and men of high religious claims, show us that thousands who could not sink into the slough of sensuality have yet thrust themselves arrogantly into needless perils, and been dashed into headlong ruin from the pinnacle of spiritual pride? And how calm, yet full of warning, was that simple answer, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Foiled in his appeal to natural hunger, or to the possibility of spiritual pride, the tempter appealed to "the last infirmity of noble minds," and staked all on one splendid cast. He makes up for the want of subtlety in the form by the apparent magnificence of the issue. From a high mountain he showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and as the "prince of this world," he offered them all to Him who had lived as the village carpenter, in return for one expression of homage, one act of acknowledgment.

"The kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them!" "There are some that will say," says Bishop Andrewes, "that we are never tempted with kingdoms. It may well be, for it needs not be, when less will serve. It was Christ only that was thus tempted; in Him lay an heroic mind that could not be tempted with small matters. But with us it is nothing so, for we esteem more basely of ourselves. We



set our wares at a very easy price; he may buy us even dagger-cheap. He need never carry us so high as the mount. The pinnacle is high enough; yea, the lowest steeple in all the town would serve the turn. Or let him but carry us to the leads and gutters of our own houses; nay, let us but stand in our windows or our doors, if he will give us so much as we can there see, he will tempt us thoroughly; we will accept it, and thank him, too . . . A matter of half a crown, or ten groats, a pair of shoes, or some such trifle, will bring us on our knees to the devil."

But Christ taught, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

He who is an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven is lord over vaster and more real worlds, infinitely happy because infinitely pure. And over that kingdom Satan has no power. It is the kingdom of God; and since from Satan not even the smallest semblance of any of his ruinous gifts can be gained except by suffering the soul to do allegiance to him, the answer to all his temptations is the answer of Christ, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

Thus was Christ victorious, through that self-renunciation through which only can victory be won. And the moments of such honest struggle crowned with victory are the very sweetest and happiest that the life of man can give. They are full of an elevation and a delight which can only be described in language borrowed from the imagery of heaven.

"Then the devil leaveth Him"—Luke adds, "till a fitting opportunity"—"and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him."

## Chapter 10

### THE FIRST APOSTLES

VICTORIOUS over that concentrated temptation, safe from the fiery ordeal, the Saviour left the wilderness and returned to the fords of Jordan.

The Synoptical Gospels, which dwell mainly on the ministry in Galilee, and date its active commencement from the imprisonment of John, omit all record of the intermediate events, and only mention our Lord's retirement to Nazareth. It is to the fourth Evangelist that we owe the beautiful narrative of the days which immediately ensued upon the temptation. The Judean ministry is brought by him into the first prominence. He seems to have made a point of relating nothing of which he had not been a personal witness, and there are some few indications that he was bound to Jerusalem by peculiar relations. By station John was a fisherman, and it is not impossible that, as the fish of the Lake of Galilee were sent in large quantities to Jerusalem, he may have lived there at certain seasons in connection with the employment of his father and his brother, who, as the owners of their own boat and the masters of hired servants, evidently occupied a position of some importance. Be that as it may, it is John alone who narrates to us the first call of the earliest apostles, and he relates it with all the minute particulars and graphic touches of one on whose heart and memory each incident had been indelibly impressed.

The deputation of the Sanhedrin seems to have taken

place the day previous to our Lord's return from the wilderness; and when, on the following morning, the Baptist saw Jesus approaching, he delivered a public and emphatic testimony that this was indeed the Messiah who had been marked out to him by the appointed sign, and that He was "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Whether the prominent conception in the Baptist's mind was the Paschal Lamb, or the Lamb of the morning and evening sacrifice; whether "the world" was the actual expression which he used, or is merely a Greek rendering of the word "people"; whether he understood the profound and awful import of his own utterance or was carried by prophetic inspiration beyond himself—we cannot tell. But this much is clear, that since his whole imagery, and indeed the very description of his own function and position, is, as we have already seen, borrowed from the Evangelical prophet, he must have used the expression with distinct reference to the picture of divine patience and mediatorial suffering in Isaiah 53:7 (cf. Jer. 11:19). His words could hardly have involved less meaning than this—that the gentle and sinless man to whom he pointed should be a man of sorrows, and that these sorrows should be for the salvation of His race. Whatever else the words may have connoted to the minds of his hearers, yet they could hardly have thought them over without connecting Jesus with the conceptions of sinlessness, of suffering, and of a redeeming work.

Memorable as this testimony was, it seems on the first day to have produced no immediate result. But on the second day, when the Baptist was standing accompanied by two of his disciples, Jesus again walked by, and John, fixing upon Him his intense and earnest gaze, exclaimed again, as though with involuntary awe and admiration, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

The words were too remarkable to be again neglected, and the two Galilean youths who heard them followed the retreating figure of Jesus. He caught the sound of their

timid footsteps, and turning round to look at them as they came near, He gently asked, "What seek ye?"

It was but the very beginning of His ministry; as yet they could not know Him for all that He was; as yet they had not heard the gracious words that proceeded out of His lips; in coming to seek Him thus they might be actuated by inadequate motives, or even by mere passing curiosity; it was fit that they should come to Him by spontaneous impulse, and declare their object of their own free will.

It was more than the two young Galileans could answer Him at once; it meant more perhaps than they knew or understood, yet the answer showed that they were in earnest. "Rabbi," they said (and the title of profound honor and reverence showed how deeply His presence had impressed them), "where art thou staying?"

Where it was we do not know. Perhaps in one of the temporary booths, covered at the top with the striped *abba*, which is in the East an article of ordinary wear, and with their wattled sides interwoven with green branches of terebinth or palm, which must have given the only shelter possible to the hundreds who had flocked to John's baptism. "He saith to them, Come and see." Again, the words were very simple, though they occur in passages of much significance. Never, however, did they produce a result more remarkable than now. They came and saw where Jesus dwelt, and as it was then four in the afternoon, stayed there that day, and probably slept there that night; and before they lay down to sleep they knew and felt in their inmost hearts that the kingdom of heaven had come, that the hopes of long centuries were now fulfilled, that they had been in the presence of Him who was the desire of all nations, the Priest greater than Aaron, the Prophet greater than Moses, the King greater than David, the true Star of Jacob and Scepter of Israel.

One of those two youths who thus came earliest to Christ was Andrew. The other suppressed his own name because

he was the narrator, the Beloved Disciple, the Evangelist John. No wonder that the smallest details, down even to the very hour of the day, were treasured in his memory, never to be forgotten, even in extreme old age.

It was the first care of Andrew to find his brother Simon, and tell him of this great Eureka. He brought him to Jesus, and Jesus looking earnestly on him with that royal gaze which read intuitively the inmost thoughts—seeing at a glance in that simple fisherman all the weakness but also all the splendid greatness of the man—said, giving him a new name, which was long afterwards yet more solemnly confirmed, “Thou art Simon, the Son of Jona; thou shalt be called Kephas”; that is, “Thou art Simon, the son of the dove; hereafter thou shalt be as the rock in which the dove hides.” It was, indeed, a play upon the word, but one which was memorably symbolic and profound. None but the shallow and the ignorant will see, in such a play upon the name, anything derogatory to the Saviour’s dignity. The essential meaning and augury of names had been in all ages a belief among the Jews, whose very language was regarded by themselves as being no less sacred than the oracular gems on Aaron’s breast. Their belief in the mystic potency of sounds, of the tongue guided by unalterable destiny in the realms of seeming chance, may seem idle and superstitious to an artificial cultivation, but has been shared by many of the deepest thinkers in every age.

The third day after the return from the wilderness seems to have been spent by Jesus in intercourse with His new disciples. On the fourth day He wished to start for His return to Galilee, and on the journey fell in with another young fisherman, Philip of Bethsaida. Alone of the apostles Philip had a Greek name, derived, perhaps, from the tetrarch Philip, since the custom of naming children after reigning princes has always been a common one. If so, he must at this time have been under thirty. Possibly his Greek name indicates his familiarity with some of the Greek-speaking

population who lived mingled with the Galileans on the shores of Gennesareth; and this may account for the fact that he, rather than any of the other apostles, was appealed to by the Greeks who, in the last week of His life, wished to see our Lord. One word—the one pregnant invitation "*Follow Me!*"—was sufficient to attach to Jesus forever the gentle and simple-minded apostle, whom in all probability He had previously known.

The next day a fifth neophyte was added to that sacred and happy band. Eager to communicate the rich discovery which he had made, Philip sought out his friend Nathanael, exercising thereby the divinest prerogative of friendship, which consists in the communication to others of all that we have ourselves experienced to be most divine. Nathanael, in the list of apostles, is generally, and almost indubitably, identified with Bartholomew. As his home was at Cana of Galilee, the son of Tolmai might easily have become acquainted with the young fishermen of Gennesareth. And yet so deep was the retirement in which up to this time Jesus had lived His life, that though Nathanael knew Philip, he knew nothing of Christ. The simple mind of Philip seemed to find a pleasure in contrasting the grandeur of His office with the meanness of His birth: "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write"; whom think you? A young Herodian prince? A young Asmonean priest? Some burning light from the school of Shammai or Hillel? Some passionate young Emir from the followers of Judas of Gamala? No, but "*Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*"

Nathanael seems to have felt the contrast. He caught at the local designation. It may be, as legend says, that he was a man of higher position than the rest of the apostles. It has been usually considered that his answer was proverbial; but perhaps it was a passing allusion to the word *nazora*, "despicable"; or it may merely have implied "*Nazareth*, that obscure and ill-reputed town in its little untrodden

valley—can anything good come from thence?" The answer is in the same words which our Lord had addressed to John and Andrew. Philip was an apt scholar, and he, too, said, "*Come and see.*"

The fastidious reluctance of Nathanael was very soon dispelled. Jesus, as He saw him coming, recognized that the seal of God was upon his forehead, and said of him, "Behold a true Israelite, in whom guile is not." "Whence dost thou recognize me?" asked Nathanael; and then came that heart-searching answer, "Before that Philip called thee, whilst thou wert under the fig tree, I saw thee."

It was the custom of pious Jews—a custom approved by the Talmud—to study their *crishma*, or office of daily prayer, under a fig tree; and some have imagined that there is something significant in the fact of the apostle having been summoned from the shade of a tree which symbolized Jewish ordinances and Jewish traditions, but which was beginning already to cumber the ground. But though something interesting and instructive may often be derived from the poetic insight of a chastened imagination which can thus observe allegories which lie involved in the simplest facts, yet no such flash of sudden perception could alone have accounted for the agitated intensity of Nathanael's reply. Everyone must have been struck, at first sight, with the apparent disproportionateness between the cause and the effect. How apparently inadequate was that quiet allusion to the lonely session of silent thought under the fig tree, to produce the instantaneous adhesion, the henceforth inalienable loyalty, of this "fusile apostle" to the Son of God, the King of Israel! But for the true explanation of this instantaneity of conviction, we must look deeper; and then, if I mistake not, we shall see in this incident another of those indescribable touches of reality which have been to so many powerful minds the most irresistible internal evidence to establish the historic truthfulness of the Fourth Gospel.

It was a life of which the world sees nothing, because it was "*hid* with Christ in God"; but of this we may be sure, that never till the day of his martyrdom, or even during his martyr agonies, did he forget those quiet words which showed that his "Lord had searched him out and known him, and comprehended his thoughts long before." Not once, doubtless, but on many and many a future day was the promise fulfilled for him and for his companions, that, with the eye of faith, they should "see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."



## Chapter 11

### THE FIRST MIRACLE

"On the third day," says John, "there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee." Writing with a full knowledge and vivid recollection of every fact that took place during those divinely-memorable days, he gives his indications of time as though all were equally familiar with them. The third day has been understood in different manners: it is simplest to understand it as the third after the departure of Jesus for Galilee. If He were traveling expeditiously He might stop on the first night (supposing him to follow the ordinary route) at Shiloh or at Shechem; on the second at En-Gannim; on the third, crossing the plain of Jezreel, He could easily reach Nazareth, and finding that His mother and brethren were not there, might, in an hour and a half longer, reach Cana in time for the ceremonies of an Oriental wedding.

Whether the marriage festival lasted for seven days, as was usual among those who could afford it, or only for one or two, as was the case among the poorer classes, we cannot tell; but at some period of the entertainment the wine suddenly ran short. None but those who know how sacred in the East is the duty of lavish hospitality, and how passionately the obligation to exercise it to the utmost is felt, can realize the gloom which this incident would have thrown over the occasion, or the misery and mortification which it would have caused to the wedded pair. They would have felt it to be, as in the East it would still be felt to be, a bitter and indelible disgrace.

Now, the presence of Jesus and His five disciples may well have been the cause of this unexpected deficiency. It is probable that no provision had been made for this increase of numbers, and that it was their unexpected presence which caused the deficiency in this simple household. Moreover, it is hardly probable that, coming from a hasty journey of ninety miles, the little band could, even had their means permitted it, have conformed to the common Jewish custom of bringing with them wine and other provisions to contribute to the mirthfulness of the wedding feast.

Under these circumstances, therefore, there was a special reason why the mother of Jesus should say to Him, "They have no wine." The remark was evidently a pointed one, and its import could not be misunderstood. None knew, as Mary knew, who her Son was; yet for thirty long years of patient waiting for this manifestation, she had but seen Him grow as other children grow, and live, in sweetness indeed and humility and grace of sinless wisdom, like a tender plant before God, but in all other respects as other youths have lived, pre-eminent only in utter stainlessness. But now He was thirty years old; the voice of the great prophet, with whose fame the nation rang, had proclaimed Him to be the promised Christ; He was being publicly attended by disciples who acknowledged Him as Rabbi and Lord. Here was a difficulty to be met; an act of true kindness to be performed; a disgrace to be averted from friends whom He loved—and that, too, a disgrace to which His own presence and that of His disciples had unwittingly contributed. Was not His hour yet come? Who could tell what He might do, if He were only made aware of the trouble which threatened to interrupt the feast? Might not some band of hymning angels, like the radiant visions, who had heralded His birth, receive His bidding to change that humble marriage feast into a scene of heaven? Might it not be that even now He would lead them into His banquet-house, and His banner over them be love?

Her faith was strong, her motives pure, except perhaps what has been called "the slightest possible touch of the purest womanly, motherly anxiety [we know no other word] prompting in her the desire to see *her Son* honored in her presence." And her Son's hour *had* nearly come: but it was necessary now, at once, forever, for that Son to show to her that henceforth He was not Jesus the Son of Mary, but the Christ the Son of God; that as regarded His great work and mission, as regarded His eternal Being, the significance of the beautiful relationship had passed away; that His thoughts were not as her thoughts, neither His ways her ways. It could not have been done in a manner more decisive, yet at the same time more entirely tender.

"*Woman, what have I to do with thee?*" The words at first sound harsh, and almost repellent in their roughness and brevity; but that is the fault partly of our version, partly of our associations. He does not call her "Mother," because, in circumstances such as these, she was His mother no longer; but the address "Woman" was so respectful that it might be, and was, addressed to the queenliest; and so gentle that it might be, and was, addressed at the tenderest moments to the most fondly loved. And "What have I to do with thee?" is a literal version of a common Aramaic phrase which, while it sets aside a suggestion and waives all further discussion of it, is yet perfectly consistent with the most delicate courtesy, and the most feeling consideration.

Nor can we doubt that even the slight check involved in these quiet words was still more softened by the look and accent with which they were spoken, and which are often sufficient to prevent far harsher utterances from inflicting any pain. For with undiminished faith, and with no trace of pained feeling, Mary said to the servants—over whom it is clear she was exercising some authority—"Whatever He says to you, do it at once."

The first necessity after a journey in the East is to wash the feet, and before a meal to wash the hands: and to supply

these wants there were standing (as still is usual), near the entrance of the house, six large stone water-jars, with their orifices filled with bunches of fresh green leaves to keep the water cool. Each of these jars contained two or three *baths* of water, and Jesus bade the servants at once fill them to the brim. They did so, and He then ordered them to draw out the contents in smaller vessels, and carry it to the guest who, according to the festive custom of the time, had been elected "governor of the feast." Knowing nothing of what had taken place, he mirthfully observed that in offering the good wine last, the bridegroom had violated the common practice of banquets. This was Christ's first miracle, and thus, with a definite and symbolic purpose, did He manifest His glory, and His disciples believed on Him.

There are two characteristics of this first miracle which we ought to notice.

One is its divine unselfishness. His ministry is to be a ministry of joy and peace; His sanction is to be given not to a crushing asceticism, but to a genial innocence; His approval, not to a compulsory celibacy, but to a sacred union. He who, to appease His own sore hunger, would not turn the stones of the wilderness into bread, gladly exercises, for the sake of others, His transforming power; and but six or seven days afterwards, relieves the perplexity and sorrow of a humble wedding feast by turning water into wine. The first miracle of Moses was, in stern retribution, to turn the river of a guilty nation into blood; the first of Jesus to fill the water-jars of a family with wine.

And the other is its symbolical character. Like nearly all the miracles of Christ, it combines the characteristics of a work of mercy, an emblem, and a prophecy. The world gives its best first, and afterwards all the drags and bitterness; but Christ came to turn the lower into the richer and sweeter, the Mosaic law into the perfect law of liberty, the baptism of John into the baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire, the self-denials of a painful isolation into the self-

denials of a happy home, sorrow and sighing into hope and blessing, and water into wine. And thus the "holy estate" which Christ adorned and beautified with His presence and first miracle in Cana of Galilee foreshadows the mystical union between Christ and His Church; and the common element which He thus miraculously changed becomes a type of our life on earth transfigured and ennobled by the anticipated joys of heaven—a type of that wine which He shall drink new with us in the kingdom of God, at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

## Chapter 12

### NICODEMUS

A CASTE or a sect may consist for the most part of haughty fanatics and obstinate bigots, but it will be strange indeed if there are to be found among them no exceptions to the general characteristics; strange if honesty, candor, sensibility are utterly dead among them all. Even among rulers, scribes, Pharisees, and wealthy members of the Sanhedrin, Christ found believers and followers. The earliest and most remarkable of these was Nicodemus, a rich man, a ruler, a Pharisee, and a member of the Sanhedrin.

A constitutional timidity is, however, observable in all which the Gospels tell us about Nicodemus; a timidity which could not be wholly overcome even by his honest desire to befriend and acknowledge One whom he knew to be a Prophet, even if he did not at once recognize in Him the promised Messiah. Thus the few words which he interposed to check the rash injustice of his colleagues are cautiously rested on a general principle, and betray no indication of his personal faith in the Galilean whom his sect despised. And even when the power of Christ's love, manifested on the cross, had made the most timid disciples bold, Nicodemus does not come forward with his splendid gifts of affection until the example had been set by one of his own wealth, and rank, and station in society.

Such was the rabbi who, with that mingled candor and fear of man which characterize all that we know of him, came indeed to Jesus, but came cautiously by night. He

was anxious to know more of this young Galilean prophet whom he was too honest not to recognize as a teacher come from God; but he thought himself too eminent a person among his sect to compromise his dignity, and possibly even his safety, by visiting Him in public.

Although he is alluded to in only a few touches, because of that high teaching which Jesus vouchsafed to him, yet the impression left upon us by his individuality is inimitably distinct, and wholly beyond the range of invention. His very first remark shows the indirect character of his mind—his way of suggesting rather than stating what he wished—the half-patronizing desire to ask, yet the half-shrinking reluctance to frame his question—the admission that Jesus had come “from God,” yet the hesitating implication that it was only as “a teacher,” and the suppressed inquiry “What must I do?”

Our Lord saw deep into his heart, and avoiding all formalities or discussion of preliminaries, startles him at once with the solemn uncompromising address, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again [or “from above”], he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “My disciple must be Mine in heart and soul, or he is no disciple at all; the question is not of doing or not doing, but of *being*.”

That answer startled Nicodemus into deep earnestness; but like the Jews in John 2:20, he either could not, or would not, grasp its full significance. He prefers to play, with a kind of querulous surprise, about the mere literal meaning of the words which he chooses to interpret in the most physical and unintelligible sense. Mere logomachy like this Jesus did not pause to notice; He only sheds a fresh ray of light on the reiteration of His former warning. He spoke, not of the fleshly birth, but of that spiritual regeneration of which no man could predict the course or method, any more than they could tell the course of the night breeze that rose and fell and whispered fitfully outside the little tabernacle where they sat, but which must be a birth by water

and by the Spirit—a purification, that is, and a renewal—an outward symbol and an inward grace—a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.

Nicodemus could only answer by an expression of incredulous amazement. A Gentile might need, as it were, a new birth when admitted into the Jewish communion; but he—a son of Abraham, a rabbi, a zealous keeper of the Law—could *he* need that new birth? How could such things be?

“Art thou *the* teacher of Israel,” asked our Lord, “and knowest not these things?” “Art thou the third member of the Sanhedrin, and yet knowest not the earliest, simplest lesson of the initiation into the kingdom of heaven? If thy knowledge be thus carnal, thus limited—if thus thou stumblest on the threshold, how canst thou understand those deeper truths which He only who came down from heaven can make known?” The question was half sorrowful, half reproachful; but He proceeded to reveal to this master in Israel things greater and stranger than these; even the salvation of man rendered possible by the sufferings and exaltation of the Son of Man; the love of God manifested in sending His only-begotten Son, not to judge but to save; the deliverance for all through faith in Him; the condemnation which must fall on those who willfully reject the truths He came to teach.

These were indeed the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven—truths once undreamed of, but now fully revealed. And although they violated every prejudice, and overthrew every immediate hope of this aged inquirer—though to learn them he must unlearn the entire intellectual habits of his life and training—yet we know from the sequel that they must have sunk into his inmost soul. Doubtless in the further discussion of them the night deepened around them; and in the memorable words about the light and the darkness with which the interview was closed, Jesus gently rebuked the fear



of man which led this great rabbi to seek the shelter of midnight for a deed which was not a deed of darkness needing to be concealed, but which was indeed a coming to the true and only Light.

## Chapter 13

### THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

PERHAPS in consequence of this determined rejection of the earliest steps of His teaching—perhaps also out of regard for the wounded feelings of John's followers—but most of all because at this very time the news reached Him that John had been seized by Herod Antipas and thrown into prison—Jesus left Judea and again departed into Galilee. Being already in the north of Judea, He chose the route which led through Samaria. The fanaticism of Jewish hatred, the fastidiousness of Jewish Pharisaism, which led His countrymen when traveling alone to avoid that route, could have no existence for Him, and were things rather to be discouraged than approved.

Starting early in the morning, to enjoy as many as possible of the cool hours for traveling, he stopped at length for rest and refreshment in the neighborhood of Sychar, a city not far from the well in the fertile district which the partiality of the patriarch Jacob had bequeathed to his favorite son. The well, like all frequented wells in the East, was doubtless sheltered by a little alcove, in which were seats of stone.

It was the hour of noon, and weary as He was with the long journey, possibly also with the extreme heat, our Lord sat "thus" on the well. The expression in the original is most pathetically picturesque. It implies that the Wayfarer was quite tired out, and in His exhaustion flung His limbs wearily on the seat, anxious if possible for complete repose. His disciples—probably the two pairs of brothers whom he

had called among the earliest, and with them the friends Philip and Bartholomew — had left him, to buy in the neighboring city what was necessary for their wants; and hungry and thirsty, He who bore all our infirmities sat wearily awaiting them, when His solitude was broken by the approach of a woman. In a May noon in Palestine the heat may be indeed intense, but it is not too intense to admit of moving about; and this woman, either from accident, or, possibly, because she was in no good repute, and therefore would avoid the hour when the well would be thronged by all the women of the city, was coming to draw water. Her national enthusiasm and reverence for the great ancestor of her race, or perhaps the superior coolness and freshness of the water, may have been sufficient motive to induce her to seek this well, rather than any nearer fountain. Water in the East is not only a necessity, but a delicious luxury, and the natives of Palestine are connoisseurs as to its quality.

Jesus would have hailed her approach. The scene, indeed, in that rich green valley, with the great corn fields spreading far and wide, and the grateful shadow of trees, and the rounded masses of Ebal and Gerizim rising on either hand, might well have invited to lonely musing; and all the associations of that sacred spot — the story of Jacob, the neighboring tomb of the princely Joseph, the memories of Joshua, and of Gideon, and the long line of Israelitish kings — would supply many a theme for such meditations. But the Lord was thirsty and fatigued, and having no means of reaching the cool water which glimmered deep below the well's mouth, He said to the woman, "Give me to drink."

Everyone who has traveled in the East knows how glad and ready is the response to this request. The miserable Fellah, even the rough Bedawy, seems to feel a positive pleasure in having it in his power to obey the command of his great prophet, and share with a thirsty traveler the priceless element. But so deadly was the hatred and rivalry between Jews and Samaritans, so entire the absence of all

familiar intercourse between them, that the request only elicited from the woman of Samaria an expression of surprise that it should have been made.

Gently, and without a word of rebuke, our Lord tells her that had she known Him, and asked of Him, He would have given her living water. She pointed to the well, a hundred feet deep. He had nothing to draw with: whence could He obtain this living water? And then, perhaps with a smile of incredulity and national pride, she asked if He were greater than their father Jacob, who had digged and drunk of that very well. And yet there must have been something which struck and overawed her in His words, for now she addresses Him by the title of respect which had been wanting in her first address.

Our Lord is not deterred by the hard literalism of her reply; He treats it as He had treated similar unimaginative dullness in the learned Nicodemus, by still drawing her thoughts upwards, if possible, to a higher region. She was thinking of common water, of which he who drinketh would thirst again; but the water He spake of was a fountain within the heart, which quenched all thirst forever, and sprang up unto eternal life.

*She* becomes the suppliant now. He had asked her a little favor, which she had delayed, or half declined; He now offers her an eternal gift. She sees that she is in some great Presence, and begs for this living water, but again with the same unspiritual narrowness—she only begs for it that she might thirst no more, nor come there to draw.

But enough was done for the present to awake and to instruct this poor stranger, and abruptly breaking off this portion of the conversation, Jesus bids her call her husband and return. All that was in His mind when He uttered this command we cannot tell; it may have been because the immemorial decorum of the East regarded it as unbecoming, if not as positively wrong, for any man, and above all for the Rabbi, to hold conversation with a strange woman; it

may have been also to break a stony heart, to awake a sleeping conscience. For she was forced to answer that she had no husband, and our Lord, in grave confirmation of her sad confession, unbared to her the secret of a loose and wanton life. She had had five husbands and he whom she now had was not her husband.

She saw that a Prophet was before her, but from the facts of her own history—on which she is naturally anxious to linger as little as possible—her eager mind flies to the one great question which was daily agitated with such fierce passion between her race and that of Him to whom she spake, and which lay at the root of the savage animosity with which they treated each other. She had been thrown into the society of a great Teacher: was it not a good opportunity to settle forever the immense discussion between Jews and Samaritans as to whether Jerusalem or Gerizim was the holy place of Palestine—Jerusalem, where Solomon had built his temple; or Gerizim, the immemorial sanctuary, where Joshua had uttered the blessings, and where Abraham had been ready to offer up his son? Pointing to the summit of the mountain towering eight hundred feet above them, and crowned by the ruins of the ancient temple of Manasseh, which Hyrcanus had destroyed, she put her dubious question, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship?"

Briefly, and merely by the way of parenthesis, He resolved her immediate problem. As against the Samaritans, the Jews were unquestionably right. Jerusalem was the place which God had chosen; compared with the hybrid and defective worship of Samaria, Judaism was pure and true; but before and after touching on the earthly and temporal controversy, He uttered to her the mighty and memorable prophecy, that the hour was coming, yea, now was, when "neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem" should true worshippers worship the Father, but in every place should worship Him in spirit and in truth.

She was deeply moved and touched; but how could she, at the mere word of an unknown stranger, give up the strong faith in which she and her fathers had been born and bred? With a sigh she referred the final settlement of this and of every question to the advent of the Messiah; and then He spake the simple, awful words—"I that speak unto thee am He."

His birth had been first revealed by night to a few unknown and ignorant shepherds; the first full, clear announcement by Himself of His own Messiahship was made by a well-side in the weary noon to a single obscure Samaritan woman. And to this poor, sinful, ignorant stranger had been uttered words of immortal significance, to which all future ages would listen, as it were, with hushed breath and on their knees.

Who would have *invented*, who would have merely *imagined*, things so unlike the thoughts of man as these?

And here the conversation was interrupted; for the disciples—and among them he who writes the record—returned to their Master. Jacob's well is dug on an elevated ground, on a spur of Gerizim, and in a part of the plain unobstructed and unshaded by trees or buildings. From a distance in that clear air they had seen and had heard their Master in long and earnest conversation with a solitary figure. He a Jew, He a Rabbi, talking to "a woman," and that woman a Samaritan, that Samaritan a sinner! Yet they dared not suggest anything to Him; they dared not question Him. The sense of His majesty, the love and the faith His very presence breathed, overshadowed all minor doubts or wondering curiosities.

Meanwhile the woman, forgetting even her water-pot in her impetuous amazement, had hurried to the city with her wondrous story. Here was One who had revealed to her the very secrets of her life. Was not this the Messiah?

The Samaritans—in all the Gospel notices of whom we detect something simpler and more open to conviction than

in the Jews—instantly flocked out of the city at her words, and while they were seen approaching, the disciples urged our Lord to eat, for the hour of noon was now past, and He had had a weary walk. "I have food to eat," He said, "which ye know not." Might they not have understood that, from childhood upwards, He had not lived by bread alone? But again we find the same dull, hard, stolid literalism. Their Scriptures, the very idiom in which they spoke, were full of vivid metaphors, yet they could hit on no deeper explanation of His meaning than that perhaps someone had brought Him something to eat. How hard must it have been for Him thus, at every turn, to find even in His chosen ones such a strange incapacity to see that material images were but the vehicles for deep spiritual thoughts. But there was no impatience in Him who was meek and lowly of heart. "My meat," He said, "is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." And then pointing to the inhabitants of Sichem, as they streamed to Him over the plain, he continued, "You talk of there being yet four months to harvest. Look at these fields, white already for the spiritual harvest. Ye shall be the joyful reapers of the harvest which I thus have sown in toil and pain; but I, the sower, rejoice in the thought of that joy to come."

The personal intercourse with Christ convinced many of these Samaritans far more deeply than the narrative of the woman to whom He had first revealed Himself; and graciously acceding to their request that He would stay with them, He and His disciples abode there two days. Doubtless it was the teaching of those two days that had a vast share in the rich conversion of a few subsequent years.

## Chapter 14

### THE TWELVE, AND THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

AFTER one of His days of loving and ceaseless toil, Jesus, as was His wont, found rest and peace in prayer. "He went out into a mountain"—or, as it should rather be rendered, "into *the* mountain"—"to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."

The scene of this lonely vigil, and of the Sermon on the Mount, was in all probability the singular elevation known at this day as the Kurn Hattin, or "Horns of Hattin." Hitherward, in all probability, our Lord wandered in the evening between the rugged and brigand-haunted crags which form the sides of the Vale of Doves, stopping, perhaps, at times to drink the clear water of the little stream, to gather the pleasant apples, and to watch the eagles swooping down on some near point of rock. And hither, in the morning, less heedful than their Divine Master of the manifold beauties of the scene, the crowd followed Him—loth even for a time to lose His inspiring presence, eager to listen to the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth.

It was at dawn of day, and before the crowd had assembled, that our Lord summoned into His presence the disciples who had gradually gathered around Him. Hitherto the relation which bound them to His person seems to have been loose and partial; and it is doubtful whether they at all realized its full significance. But now the hour was come, and out of the wider band of general followers He made the final and special choice of His twelve apostles.



Their number was insignificant compared with the pompous retinue of hundreds who called themselves followers of a Hillel or a Gamaliel, and their position in life was humble and obscure. Simon and Andrew the sons of Jonas, James and John the sons of Zabdia, and Philip, were of the little village of Bethsaida. If Matthew be the same as Levi, he was a son of Alphaeus, and therefore a brother of James the Less and of Jude, the brother of James, who is generally regarded as identical with Lebbeus and Thaddeus. Nathanael or Bartholomew was of Cana of Galilee. Thomas and Simon Zelotes were also Galileans. Judas Iscariot was the son of a Simon Iscariot, but whether this Simon is identical with the Zealot cannot be determined.

Such were the chief of the apostles whom their Lord united into one band as He sat on the green summit of Kurn Hattin. We may suppose that on one of those two peaks He had passed the night in prayer, and had there been joined by His disciples at the early dawn. By what external symbol, if by any, our Lord ratified this first ordination to the apostolate we do not know; but undoubtedly the present choice was regarded as formal and as final. Henceforth there was to be no return to the fisher's boat or the publican's booth as a source of sustenance; but the disciples were to share the wandering missions, the evangelic labors, the scant meal, and uncertain home which marked even the happiest period of the ministry of their Lord. They were to be weary with Him under the burning noonday, and to sleep, as He did, under the starry sky.

And while the choice was being made, a vast promiscuous multitude had begun to gather. Not only from the densely-populated shores of the Sea of Galilee, but even from Judea and Jerusalem—nay, even from the distant sea coasts of Tyre and Sidon—they had crowded to touch His person and hear His words. From the peak He descended to the flat summit of the hill, and first of all occupied Himself with the physical wants of those anxious hearers, healing

their diseases, and dispossessing the unclean spirits of the souls which they had seized. And then, when the multitude were seated in calm and serious attention on the grassy sides of that lovely natural amphitheater, He raised His eyes, which had, perhaps, been bent downwards for a few moments of inward prayer, and opening His mouth, delivered primarily to His disciples, but intending through them to address the multitude, that memorable discourse which will be known forever as "the Sermon on the Mount."

The sermon began with the word "blessed," and with an octave of beatitudes. But it was a *new* revelation of beatitude. The people were expecting a Messiah who should break the yoke off their necks—a king clothed in earthly splendor, and manifested in the pomp of victory and vengeance. Their minds were haunted with legendary prophecies, as to how He should stand on the shore of Joppa, and bid the sea pour out its pearls and treasure at His feet; how He should clothe them with jewels and scarlet, and feed them with even a sweeter manna than the wilderness had known. But Christ reveals to them another King, another happiness—the riches of poverty, the royalty of meekness, the high beatitude of sorrow and persecution. And this new Law, which should not only command but also aid, was to be set forth in beneficent manifestation—at once as salt to preserve the world from corruption, and as a light to guide it in the darkness. And then follows a comparison of the new Law of mercy with the old Law of threatening; the old was transitory, this permanent; the old demanded obedience in outward action, the new was to permeate the thoughts; the old contained the rule of conduct, the new the secret of obedience. The command "Thou shalt not murder" was henceforth extended to angry words and feelings of hatred. The germ of adultery was shown to be involved in a lascivious look. The prohibition of perjury was extended to every vain and unnecessary oath. The law of equivalent revenge was superseded by a law of absolute self-abnegation. The love

due to our neighbor was extended also to our enemy. Henceforth the children of the kingdom were to aim at nothing less than this—namely, to be *perfect*, as their Father in heaven is perfect.

And the new life which was to issue from this new Law was to be contrasted in all respects with that routine of exaggerated scruples and Pharisaic formalism which had hitherto been regarded as the highest type of a religious conversation. Alms were to be given not with noisy ostentation, but in modest secrecy. Prayers were to be uttered not with hypocritic publicity, but in holy solitude. Fasting was to be exercised not as a belauded virtue, but as a private self-denial. And all these acts of devotion were to be offered with sole reference to the love of God, in a simplicity which sought no earthly reward, but which stored up for itself a heavenly and incorruptible treasure. And the service to be sincere must be entire and undistracted. The cares and the anxieties of life were not to divert its earnestness or to trouble its repose. The God to whom it was directed was a Father also, and He who ever feeds the fowls of the air, which neither sow nor reap, and clothes in their more than regal loveliness the flowers of the field, would not fail to clothe and feed, and that without any need for their own toilsome anxiety, the children who seek His righteousness as their first desire.

And what should be the basis of such service? The self-examination which issues in a gentleness which will not condemn, in a charity that cannot believe, in an ignorance that will not know, the sins of others; the reserve which will not waste or degrade things holy; the faith which seeks for strength from above, and knows that, seeking rightly, it shall obtain; the self-denial which, in the desire to increase God's glory and man's happiness, sees the sole guide of its action towards all the world.

The gate was strait, the path narrow, but it led to life; by the lives and actions of those who professed to live by

it, and point it out, they were to judge whether their doctrine was true or false; without this neither words of orthodoxy would avail, nor works of power.

Lastly, He warned them that he who heard these sayings and did them was like a wise man who built a house with foundations dug deeply into the living rock, whose house, because it was founded upon a rock, stood unshaken amid the vehement beating of storm and surge: but he who heard and did them not was likened "unto a foolish man that built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house: and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

Such in barest and most colorless outline are the topics of that mighty sermon; nor is it marvelous that they who heard it "were astonished at the doctrine." Their main astonishment was that He taught "as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The teaching of their scribes was narrow, dogmatic, material; it was cold in manner, frivolous in matter, secondhand, and iterative in its very essence; with no freshness in it, no force, no fire; servile to all authority, opposed to all independence; at once erudite and foolish, at once contemptuous and mean; never passing a hair's breadth beyond the carefully-watched boundary line of commentary and precedent; full of balanced inference and orthodox hesitancy, and impossible literalism; intricate with legal pettiness and labyrinthine system; elevating mere memory above genius, and repetition above originality; concerned only about priests and Pharisees, in Temple and synagogue, or school, or Sanhedrin, and mostly occupied with things infinitely little. But this teaching of Jesus was wholly different in its character, and as much grander as the temple of the morning sky under which it was uttered was grander than stifling synagogue or crowded school. It was preached, as each occasion rose, on the hillside, or by the lake, or on the roads, or in the house of the Pharisee, or at the banquet of the publican; nor was it any sweeter or loftier when it

was addressed in the royal portico to the masters of Israel, than when its only hearers were the ignorant people whom the haughty Pharisees held to be accursed. And there was no reserve in its administration. It flowed forth as sweetly and as lavishly to single listeners as to enraptured crowds; and some of its very richest revelations were vouchsafed neither to rulers nor to multitudes, but to the persecuted outcast of the Jewish synagogue, to the timid inquirer in the lonely midnight, and the frail woman by the noonday well. And it dealt not with scrupulous tithes and ceremonial cleansings, but with the human soul, and human destiny, and human life—with Hope, and Charity, and Faith. There were no definitions in it, or explanations, or “scholastic systems,” or philosophic theorizing, or implicated mazes of difficult and dubious discussion, but a swift intuitive insight into the very depths of the human heart—even a supreme and daring paradox that, without being fenced round with exceptions or limitations, appealed to the conscience with its irresistible simplicity, and with an absolute mastery stirred and dominated over the heart. Springing from the depths of holy emotions, it thrilled the being of every listener as with an electric flame. In a word, its authority was the authority of the Divine Incarnate; it was a Voice of God, speaking in the utterance of man; its austere purity was yet pervaded with tenderest sympathy, and its awful severity with an unutterable love. It is, to borrow the image of the wisest of the Latin Fathers, a great sea whose smiling surface breaks into refreshing ripples at the feet of our little ones, but into whose unfathomable depths the wisest may gaze with the shudder of amazement and the thrill of love.

How exquisitely and freshly simple is the actual language of Christ compared with all other teaching that has ever gained the ear of the world! There is no science in it, no art, no pomp of demonstration, no carefulness of toil, no trick of rhetoricians, no wisdom of the schools. Straight as an arrow to the mark His precepts pierce to the very depths of

the soul and spirit. All is short, clear, precise, full of holiness, full of the common images of daily life. There is scarcely a scene or object familiar to the Galilee of that day which Jesus did not use as a moral illustration of some glorious promise or moral law. He spoke of green fields, and springing flowers, and the budding of the vernal trees; of the red of lowering sky; of sunrise and sunset; of wind and rain; of night and storm; of clouds and lightning; of stream and river; of stars and lamps; of honey and salt; of quivering bulrushes and burning weeds; of rent garments and bursting wine-skins; of eggs and serpents; of pearls and pieces of money; of nets and fish. Wine and wheat, corn and oil, stewards and gardeners, laborers and employers, kings and shepherds, travelers and fathers of families, courtiers in soft clothing and brides in nuptial robes—all these are found in His discourses. He knew all life, and had gazed on it with a kindly as well as a kingly glance. He could sympathize with its joys no less than He could heal its sorrows, and the eyes that were so often suffused with tears as they saw the sufferings of earth's mourners beside the bed of death had shone also with a kindlier glow as they watched the games of earth's happy little ones in the green fields and busy streets.

## Chapter 15

### JESUS AS HE LIVED IN GALILEE

IT IS to this period of our Lord's earlier ministry that those mission journeys belong—those circuits through the towns and villages of Galilee, teaching, and preaching, and performing works of mercy—which are so frequently alluded to in the first three Gospels, and which are specially mentioned at this point of the narrative by the Evangelist Luke. "He walked in Galilee." It was the brightest, hopefulest, most active episode in His life. Let us, in imagination, stand aside and see Him pass, and so, with all humility and reverence, set before us as vividly as we can what manner of man He was.

Let us then suppose ourselves to mingle with any one fragment of those many multitudes which at this period awaited Him at every point of His career, and let us gaze on Him as they did when He was a man on earth.

We are on that little plain that runs between the hills of Zebulun and Naphtali, somewhere between the villages of Kefr Kenna and the so-called Kana el-Jalil. A sea of corn, fast yellowing to the harvest, is around us, and the bright, innumerable flowers that broder the wayside are richer and larger than those of home. The path on which we stand leads in one direction to Accho and the coast, in the other over the summit of Hattin to the Sea of Galilee. The land is lovely with all the loveliness of a spring day in Palestine, but the hearts of the eager, excited crowd, in the midst of which we stand, are too much occupied by one

absorbing thought to notice its beauty; for some of them are blind, and sick, and lame, and they know not whether today a finger of mercy, a word of healing—nay, even the touch of the garment of this great Unknown Prophet as He passes by—may not alter and gladden the whole complexion of their future lives.

The comments of the crowd show that many different motives have brought them together. Some are there from interest, some from curiosity, some from the vulgar contagion of enthusiasm which they cannot themselves explain. Marvelous tales of Him—of His mercy, of His power, of His gracious words, of His mighty deeds—are passing from lip to lip, mingled, doubtless, with suspicions and calumnies. One or two scribes and Pharisees who are present, holding themselves a little apart from the crowd, whisper to each other their perplexities, their indigation, their alarm.

Suddenly over the rising ground, at no great distance, is seen the cloud of dust which marks an approaching company; and a young boy of Magdala or Bethsaida, heedless of the scornful reproaches of the scribes, points in that direction, and runs excitedly forward with the shout of "*Malka Meshichah! Malka Meshichah!*"—"The King Messiah! The King Messiah!"—which even on youthful lips must have quickened the heartbeats of a simple Galilean throng.

And now the throng approaches. It is a motely multitude of young and old, composed mainly of peasants, but with others of higher rank interspersed in their loose array—here a frowning Pharisee, there a gaily-clad Herodian whispering to some Greek merchant or Roman soldier his scoffing comments on the enthusiasm of the crowd. But these are the few, and almost every eye of that large throng is constantly directed towards One who stands in the center of the separate group which the crowd surrounds.

He is not clothed in soft raiment of byssus or purple, like Herod's courtiers, or the luxurious friends of the Procurator Pilate: He does not wear the white ephod of



the Levite, or the sweeping robes of the scribe. There are not, on His arm and forehead, the *tephillin* or phylacteries, which the Pharisees make so broad; and though there is at each corner of His dress the fringe and blue riband which the Law enjoins, it is not worn of the ostentatious size affected by those who wished to parade the scrupulousness of their obedience. He is in the ordinary dress of His time and country. But the simple garments do not conceal the King; and though in His bearing there is nothing of the self-conscious haughtiness of the rabbi, yet, in its natural nobleness and unsought grace, it is such as instantly suffices to check every rude tongue and overawe every wicked thought.

One or two facts and features of His life on earth may here be fitly introduced.

1. First, then, it was a life of *poverty*. Some of the old Messianic prophecies, which the Jews in general so little understood, had already indicated His voluntary submission to a humble lot. "Though He were rich, yet for our sakes He became poor." He was born in the cavern-stable, cradled in the manger. His mother offered for her purification the doves which were the offering of the poor. The flight into Egypt was doubtless accompanied with many a hardship, and when He returned it was to live as a carpenter, and the son of a carpenter, in the despised provincial village. It was as a poor wandering teacher, possessing nothing, that He traveled through the land. With the words "Blessed are the poor in spirit" He began His Sermon on the Mount; and He made it the chief sign of the opening dispensation that to the poor the Gospel was being preached. It was a fit comment on this His poverty, that after but three short years of His public ministry He was sold by one of His own apostles for the thirty shekels which was the price of the meanest slave.

2. And the *simplicity* of His life corresponded to its external poverty. Never in His life did He possess a roof

which He could call His own. The humble abode at Nazareth was but shared with numerous brothers and sisters. Even the house in Capernaum which He so often visited was not His own possession; it was lent Him by one of His disciples. There never belonged to Him one foot's-breadth of the earth which He came to save. We never hear that any of the beggars, who in every Eastern country are so numerous and so importunate, asked Him for alms. Had they done so He might have answered with Peter, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have that give I thee." His food was of the plainest. He was ready indeed, when invited, to join in the social happiness of Simon's, or Levi's, or Martha's, or the bridegroom of Cana's feast; but His ordinary food was as simple as that of the humblest peasant—bread of the coarsest quality, fish caught in the lake and broiled in embers on the shore, and sometimes a piece of honeycomb, probably of the wild honey which was then found abundantly in Palestine. And yet Jesus, though poor, was not a pauper. He never received an alms but He and the little company of His followers lived on their lawful possessions or the produce of their own industry, and even had a bag or cash-box of their own, both for their own use and for their charities to others. From this they provided the simple necessities of the Paschal feast, and distributed what they could to the poor; only Christ does not Himself seem to have given money to the poor, because He gave them richer and nobler gifts than could be even compared with gold or silver.

3. And it was, as we have seen, a life of *toil*—of toil from boyhood upwards, in the shop of the carpenter, to aid in maintaining Himself and His family by honest and noble labor; of toil afterwards to save the world. We have seen that "He went about doing good," and that this, which is the epitome of His public life, constitutes also its sublimest originality. The insight which we have gained already, and shall gain still further, into the manner in which

His days were spent, shows us how overwhelming an amount of ever-active benevolence was crowded into the brief compass of the hours of light. At any moment He was at the service of any call, whether it came from an inquirer who longed to be taught, or from a sufferer who had faith to be healed. Teaching, preaching, traveling, doing works of mercy, bearing patiently with the fretful impatience of the stiffnecked and the ignorant, enduring without a murmur the incessant and selfish pressure of the multitude—work like this so absorbed His time and energy that we are told, more than once, that so many were coming and going as to leave no leisure even to eat. For Himself He seemed to claim no rest except the quiet hours of night and silence, when He retired so often to pray to His Heavenly Father, amid the mountain solitudes which He loved so well.

4. And it was a life of *health*. Among its many sorrows and trials, sickness alone was absent. We hear of His healing multitudes of the sick—we never hear that He was sick Himself. It is true that “the golden Passional of the Book of Isaiah” says of Him: “Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed”; but the best explanation of that passage has been already supplied from Matthew, that He suffered with those whom He saw suffer. He was touched with a feeling of our infirmities; His divine sympathy made those sufferings His own. Certain it is that the story of His life and death show exceptional powers of physical endurance. No one who was not endowed with perfect health could have stood out against the incessant and wearing demands of such daily life as the Gospels describe. Above all, He seems to have possessed that blessing of ready sleep which is the best natural antidote to fatigue, and the best influence to calm the overwearied mind, and “knit up the raveled

sleeve of care." Even on the wave-lashed deck of the little fishing boat as it was tossed on the stormy sea, He could sleep, with no better bed or pillow than the hard leather-covered boss that served as the steerman's cushion.

5. And, once more, it must have been a life of *sorrow*; for He is rightly called the "Man of Sorrows." However, the terms "sorrow" and "joy" are very relative, and we may be sure that if there was crushing sorrow—the sorrow of sympathy with those who suffered, the sorrow of rejection by those whom He loved, the sorrow of being hated by those whom He came to save, the sorrows of One on whom were laid the iniquities of the world, the sorrows of the last long agony upon the cross, when it seemed as if even His Father had forsaken Him—yet assuredly also there was an abounding joy. For the worst of all sorrows, the most maddening of all miseries—which is the consciousness of alienation from God, the sense of shame and guilt and inward degradation, the frenzy of self-loathing by which, as by a scourge of fire, the abandoned soul is driven to an incurable despair—*that* was absent, not only in its extreme forms, but even in the faintest of its most transient assailments; and, on the other hand, the joy of an unsullied conscience, the joy of a stainless life, the joy of a soul absolutely and infinitely removed from every shadow of baseness, and every fleck of guilt, the joy of an existence wholly devoted to the service of God and the love of man—*this* was ever present to Him in its fullest influences.

## Chapter 16

### A GREAT DAY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS

IMMEDIATELY after the missionary journey which we have described, Luke adds that when Jesus saw Himself surrounded by a great multitude out of every city, He spake by a parable. We learn from the two other Evangelists the interesting circumstance that this was the first occasion on which He taught in parables, and that they were spoken to the multitude who lined the shore while our Lord sat in His favorite pulpit, the boat which was kept for Him on the lake.

The great mass of hearers must now have been aware of the general features in the new Gospel which Jesus preached. Some self-examination, some earnest careful thought of their own was now requisite, if they were indeed sincere in their desire to profit by His words. "Take heed how ye hear" was the great lesson which He would now impress. He would warn them against the otiose attention of curiosity or mere intellectual interest, and would fix upon their minds a sense of their moral responsibility for the effects produced by what they heard. He would teach them in such a way that the extent of each hearer's profit should depend largely upon his own faithfulness.

And, therefore, to show them that the only true fruit of good teaching is holiness of life, and that there were many dangers which might prevent its growth, He told them His first parable, the Parable of the Sower. The imagery of it was derived, as usual, from the objects immediately be-

fore his eyes. To us, who from infancy have read the parable side by side with Christ's own interpretation of it, the meaning is singularly clear and plain, and we see in it the liveliest images of the danger incurred by the cold and indifferent, by the impulsive and shallow, by the worldly and ambitious, by the preoccupied and the luxurious, as they listen to the Word of God. But it was not so easy to those who heard it. Even the disciples failed to catch its full significance, although they reserved their request for an explanation till they and their Master should be alone. It is clear that parables like this, so luminous to us, but so difficult to these simple listeners, suggested thoughts which to them were wholly unfamiliar.

A method of instruction so rare, so stimulating, so full of interest—a method which, in its unapproachable beauty and finish, stands unrivaled in the annals of human speech—would doubtless tend to increase beyond measure the crowds that thronged to listen. And through the sultry afternoon He continued to teach them, barely succeeding in dismissing them when the evening was come. A sense of complete weariness and deep unspeakable longing for repose, and solitude, and sleep, seems then to have come over our Lord's spirit. Possibly the desire for rest and quiet may have been accelerated by one more ill-judged endeavor of His mother and His brethren to assert a claim upon His actions. They had not indeed been able "to come at Him for the press," but their attempt to do so may have been one more reason for a desire to get away, and be free for a time from this incessant publicity, from these irreverent interferences. At any rate, one little touch, preserved for us as usual by the graphic pen of the Evangelist Mark, shows that there was a certain eagerness and urgency in His departure, as though in His weariness, and in that oppression of mind which results from the wearing contact with numbers, He could not return to Capernaum, but suddenly determined on a change of plan. After dismissing the crowd, the disciples took Him,

*"as He was,"* in the boat, no time being left, in the urgency of His spirit, for preparation of any kind. He yearned for the quiet and deserted loneliness of the eastern shore.

Yet even now Jesus was, as it were, pursued by followers, for, as Mark again tells us, "other little ships were with Him." But they, in all probability—since we are not told of their reaching the other shore—were soon scattered or frightened back by the signs of a gathering storm. At any rate, in His own boat, and among His own trusted disciples, Jesus could rest undisturbed, and long before they were far from shore, had lain His weary head on the leather cushion of the steersman, and was sleeping the deep sleep of the worn and weary—the calm sleep of those who are at peace with God.

Even that sleep, so sorely needed, was destined to speedy and violent disturbance. One of the fierce storms peculiar to that deep hollow in the earth's surface swept down with sudden fury on the little inland sea. With scarcely a moment's notice, the air was filled with whirlwind and the sea buffeted into tempest. The danger was extreme. The boat was again and again buried amid the foam of the breakers which burst over it; yet though they must have covered Him with their dashing spray as He lay on the open deck at the stern, He was calmly sleeping on—undisturbed, so deep was His fatigue, by the tempestuous darkness—and as yet no one ventured to awake Him. Then, with sudden and vehement cries of excitement and terror, the disciples woke Him. "Lord! Master! Master! Save! We perish!" The hurricane which shook the tried courage and baffled the utmost skill of the hardy fishermen did not ruffle for one instant the deep inward serenity of the Son of Man. Without one sign of confusion, without one tremor of alarm, Jesus raised Himself on His elbow from the dripping stern of the laboring and half-sinking vessel, and, without further movement, stilled the tempest of their souls by the quiet words, "Why so cowardly, O ye of little faith?" And then

rising up, standing in all the calm of a natural majesty on the lofty stern, while the hurricane tossed, for a moment only, His fluttering garments and streaming hair, He gazed forth into the darkness, and His voice was heard amid the roaring of the troubled elements, saying, "Peace! Be still!" And instantly the wind dropped, and there was a great calm. And as they watched the starlight reflected on the now unrippled water, not the disciples only but even the sailors whispered to one another, "What manner of man is this?"

This is a stupendous miracle, one of those which test whether we indeed believe in the credibility of the miraculous or not; one of those miracles of power which cannot, like many of the miracles of healing, be explained away by existing laws. He who believes, he who *knows*, the efficacy of prayer, in what other men may regard as the inevitable certainties or blindly-directed accidents of life—he who has felt how the voice of a Saviour, heard across the long generations, can calm wilder storms than ever buffeted into fury the bosom of the inland lake—he who sees in the person of his Redeemer a fact more stupendous and more majestic than all those observed sequences which men endow with an imaginary omnipotence, and worship under the name of Law—to him, at least, there will be neither difficulty nor hesitation in supposing that Christ, on board that half-wrecked fishing boat, did utter His mandate, and that the wind and the sea obeyed; that His word was indeed more potent among cosmic forces than miles of agitated water, or leagues of rushing air.

Not even on the farther shore was Jesus to find peace or rest. On the contrary, no sooner had He reached that part of Perea which is called by Matthew the "country of the Gergesenes" than He was met by an exhibition of human fury, and madness, and degradation, even more terrible and startling than the rage of the troubled sea. Barely had He landed when, from among the rocky cavern-tombs of the Wady Semakh, there burst into His presence a man



troubled with the most exaggerated form of that raging madness which was universally attributed to demoniacal possession. Amid all the boasted civilization of antiquity, there existed no hospitals, no penitentiaries, no asylums; and unfortunates of this class, being too dangerous and desperate for human intercourse, could only be driven forth from among their fellow men, and restrained from mischief by measures at once inadequate and cruel. Under such circumstances they could, if irreclaimable, only take refuge in those holes along the rocky hillsides which abound in Palestine, and which were used by the Jews as tombs. It is clear that the foul and polluted nature of such dwelling places, with all their associations of ghastliness and terror, would tend to aggravate the nature of the malady; and this man, who had long been afflicted, was beyond even the possibility of control. Attempts had been made to bind him, but in the paroxysms of his mania he had exerted that apparently supernatural strength which is often noticed in forms of mental excitement, and had always succeeded in rending off his fetters, and twisting away or shattering his chain; and now he had been abandoned to the lonely hills and unclean solitudes which, night and day, rang with his yells as he wandered among them, dangerous to himself and to others, raving, and gashing himself with stones.

It was the frightful figure of this naked and homicidal maniac that burst upon our Lord almost as soon as He had landed at early dawn. The presence, the look, the voice of Christ, even before He addressed these sufferers, seems always to have calmed and overawed them, and this demoniac of Gergesa was no exception. Instead of falling upon the disciples, he ran to Jesus from a distance, and fell down before Him in an attitude of worship. Mingling his own perturbed individuality with that of the multitude of unclean spirits which he believed to be in possession of his soul, he entreated the Lord, in loud and terrified accents, not to torment him before the time.

It is well known that to recall a maniac's attention to his name, to awake his memory, to touch his sympathies by past association, often produces a lucid interval, and perhaps this may have been the reason why Jesus said to the man, "What is thy name?" But this question only receives the wild answer, "My name is Legion, for we are many." The man had, as it were, lost his own name; it was absorbed in hideous tyranny of that multitude of demons under whose influence his own personality was destroyed.

The narrative which follows is to us difficult of comprehension, and one which, however literally accepted, touches upon regions so wholly mysterious and unknown that we have no clue to its real significance, and can gain nothing by speculating upon it. The narrative in Luke runs as follows:—

"And there was an herd of many swine feeding upon the mountain; and they besought Him that He would suffer them to enter into them. And He suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked."

That the whole scene was violent and startling appears in the fact that the keepers of the swine "fled and told it in the city and in the country." The people of Gergesa, and the Gadarenes and Gerasenes of all the neighboring district, flocked out to see the Mighty Stranger who had thus visited their coasts. What livelier or more decisive proof of His power and His beneficence could they have had than the sight which met their eyes? The filthy and frantic demoniac who had been the terror of the country, so that none could pass that way—the wild-eyed dweller in the tombs who had been accustomed to gash himself with cries of rage, and whose untamed fierceness broke away all fetters—was now calm as a child. Some charitable hand had flung an outer robe over his naked figure, and he was sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind.

"And they were afraid"—more afraid of that Holy Presence than of the previous furies of the possessed. The man indeed was saved; but what of that, considering that some of their two thousand unclean beasts had perished! Their precious swine were evidently in danger; the greed and gluttony of every apostate Jew and low-bred Gentile in the place were clearly imperiled by receiving such a one as they saw that Jesus was. With disgraceful and urgent unanimity they entreated and implored Him to leave their coasts. Both heathens and Jews had recognized already the great truth that God sometimes answers bad prayers in His deepest anger. Jesus Himself had taught His disciples not to give that which was holy to the dogs, neither cast their pearls before swine, "lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." He had gone across the lake for quiet and rest, desiring, though among lesser multitudes, to extend to these semiheathens also the blessings of the kingdom of God. But they loved their sins and their swine, and with a perfect energy of deliberate preference for all that was base and mean, rejected such blessings, and entreated Him to go away. Sadly, but at once, He turned and left them. Gergesa was no place for Him; better the lonely hilltops to the north of it; better the crowded strand on the other side.

And yet He did not leave them in anger. One deed of mercy had been done there; one sinner had been saved; from one soul the unclean spirits had been cast out. And just as the united multitude of the Gadarenes had entreated for His absence, so the poor saved demoniac entreated henceforth to be with Him. But Jesus would fain leave one more, one last opportunity for those who had rejected Him. On others for whose sake miracles had been performed He had enjoined silence; on this man—since He was now leaving the place—He enjoined publicity. "Go home," He said, "to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord

hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." And so the demoniac of Gergesa became the first great missionary to the region of Decapolis, bearing in his own person the confirmation of his words.

## Chapter 17

### THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND, AND WALKING ON THE SEA

THE feeding of the five thousand is one of the few miracles during the ministry of Christ which are narrated to us by all four of the Evangelists; and as it is placed by John after the nameless festival and just before a Passover, and by the Synoptists in immediate connection with the return of the Twelve and the execution of the Baptist, we can hardly err in introducing it at this point of our narrative.

The novel journeyings of the apostles, the agitation of His own recent conflicts, the burden of that dread intelligence which had just reached Him, the constant pressure of a fluctuating multitude which absorbed all their time, once more rendered it necessary that the little company should recover the tone and bloom of their spirits by a brief period of rest and solitude. "Come ye yourselves," He said, "apart into a desert place, and rest a while."

It is but six miles by sea from Capernaum to the retired and desolate shore which was their destination. The little vessel, evidently retarded by unfavorable winds, made its way slowly at no great distance from the shore, and by the time it reached its destination, the object which their Master's kindness had desired for His apostles was completely frustrated. Some of the multitude had already outrun the vessel, and were thronging about the landing place when the prow touched the pebbly shore, while in the distance were seen the thronging groups of Passover pilgrims, who were at-

tracted out of their course by the increasing celebrity of this Unknown Prophet. Jesus was touched with compassion for them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd. We may conjecture from John that on reaching the land He and His disciples climbed the hillside, and there waited a short time till the whole multitude had assembled. Then, descending among them, He taught them many things, preaching to them of the kingdom of heaven, and healing their sick.

The day wore on; already the sun was sinking towards the western hills, yet still the multitude lingered, charmed by that healing voice and by those holy words. The evening would soon come, and after the brief Oriental twilight, the wandering crowd, who in their excitement had neglected even the necessities of life, would find themselves in the darkness, hungry and afar from every human habitation. The disciples began to be anxious lest the day should end in some unhappy catastrophe, which would give a fresh handle to the already embittered enemies of their Lord. But His compassion had already forestalled their considerate anxiety, and had suggested the difficulty to the mind of Philip. A little consultation took place. To buy even a mouthful apiece for such a multitude would require at least two hundred denarii; and even supposing that they possessed such a sum in their common purse, there was now neither time nor opportunity to make the necessary purchases. Andrew hereupon mentioned that there was a little boy there who had five barley loaves and two small fishes, but he only said it in a despairing way, and, as it were, to show the utter helplessness of the only suggestion which occurred to him.

"Make the men sit down," was the brief reply.

Wondering and expectant, the apostles bade the multitude recline, as for a meal, on the rich green grass which in that pleasant springtime clothed the hillsides. And then, standing in the midst of His guests—glad-hearted at the work of

mercy which He intended to perform — Jesus raised His eyes to heaven, gave thanks, blessed the loaves, broke them into pieces, and began to distribute them to His disciples, and they to the multitude; and the two fishes He divided among them all. It was a humble but a sufficient, and to hungry wayfarers a delicious, meal. And when all were abundantly satisfied, Jesus, not only to show His disciples the extent and reality of what had been done, but also to teach them the memorable lesson that wastefulness, even of miraculous power, is wholly alien to the divine economy, bade them gather up the fragments that remained, that nothing might be lost. The symmetrical arrangement of the multitude showed that about five thousand men, besides women and children, had been fed, and yet twelve baskets were filled with what was over and above to them that had eaten.

The miracle produced a profound impression. It was exactly in accordance with the current expectation, and the multitude began to whisper to each other that this must undoubtedly be "that Prophet which should come into the world"; the Shiloh of Jacob's blessing; the Star and the Scepter of Balaam's vision; the Prophet like unto Moses to whom they were to hearken; perhaps the Elijah promised by the dying breath of ancient prophecy; perhaps the Jeremiah of their tradition, come back to reveal the hiding place of the Ark, and the Urim, and the sacred fire. Jesus marked their undisguised admiration, and the danger that their enthusiasm might break out by force, and precipitate His death by open rebellion against the Roman government in the attempt to make Him a king. He saw, too, that His disciples seemed to share this worldly and perilous excitement. The time was come, therefore, for instant action. By the exercise of direct authority He compelled His disciples to embark in their boat, and cross the lake before Him in the direction of Capernaum or the western Bethsaida. A little gentle constraint was necessary, for they were natu-

rally unwilling to leave Him among the excited multitude on that lonely shore, and if anything great was going to happen to Him they felt a right to be present. On the other hand, it was more easy for Him to dismiss the multitude when they had seen that His own immediate friends and disciples had been sent away.

So in the gathering dusk He gradually and gently succeeded in persuading the multitude to leave Him, and when all but the most enthusiastic had streamed away to their homes or caravans, He suddenly left the rest and fled from them to the hilltop alone to pray. He was conscious that a solemn and awful crisis of His day on earth was come, and by communing with His Heavenly Father, He would nerve His soul for the stern work of the morrow, and the bitter conflict of many coming weeks. Once before He had spent in the mountain solitudes a night of lonely prayer, but then it was before the choice of His beloved apostles, and the glad tidings of His earliest and happiest ministry. Far different were the feelings with which the Great High Priest now climbed the rocky stairs of that great mountain altar which in His temple of the night seemed to lift Him nearer to the stars of God. The storm which now began to sweep over the barren hills, the winds that rushed howling down the ravines, the lake before Him buffeted into tempestuous foam, the little boat which — as the moonlight struggled through the rifted clouds — He saw tossing beneath Him on the laboring waves, were all too sure an emblem of the altered aspects of His earthly life. But there on the desolate hilltop, in that night of storm, He could gain strength and peace and happiness unspeakable; for there He was alone with God. And so over that figure, bowed in lonely prayer upon the hills, and over those toilers upon the troubled lake, the darkness fell and the great winds blew.

Hour after hour passed by. It was now the fourth watch of the night; the ship had traversed but half of its destined course; it was dark, and the wind was contrary, and the



waves boisterous, and they were distressed with toiling at the oar, and above all there was no one with them now to calm and save, for Jesus was alone upon the land. Alone upon the land, and they were tossing on the perilous sea; but all the while He saw and pitied them, and at last, in their worst extremity, they saw a gleam in the darkness, and an awful figure, and a fluttering robe, and One drew near them, treading upon the ridges of the sea, but seemed as if He meant to pass them by; and they cried out in terror at the sight, thinking that it was a phantom that walked upon the waves. And through the storm and darkness to them—as so often to us, when, amid the darkneses of life, the ocean seems so great, and our little boats so small—there thrilled that Voice of peace, which said, “It is I: be not afraid.”

That Voice stilled their terrors, and at once they were eager to receive Him into the ship; but Peter’s impetuous love—the strong yearning of him who, in his despairing self-consciousness, had cried out “Depart from me!”—now cannot even await His approach, and he passionately exclaims, “Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.”

“Come!”

And over the vessel’s side into the troubled waves he sprang, and while his eye was fixed on his Lord, the wind might toss his hair, and the spray might drench his robes, but all was well; but when, with wavering faith, he glanced from Him to the furious waves, and to the gulfy blackness underneath, then he began to sink, and in an accent of despair—how unlike his former confidence!—he faintly cried, “Lord, save me!” Nor did Jesus fail. Instantly, with a smile of pity, He stretched out His hand, and grasped the hand of His drowning disciple, with the gentle rebuke, “O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?” And so, his love satisfied, but his overconfidence rebuked, they climbed—the Lord and His abashed apostle—into the boat; and the wind lulled, and amid the ripple of waves upon a moonlit shore, they were at the haven where they would be; and all

—the crew as well as His disciples—were filled with deeper and deeper amazement, and some of them, addressing Him by a title which Nathanael alone had applied to Him before, exclaimed, “Truly Thou art the Son of God.”

So then if, like Peter, we fix our eyes on Jesus, we, too, may walk triumphantly over the swelling waves of disbelief, and unterrified amid the rising winds of doubt; but if we turn away our eyes from Him in whom we have believed—if, as it is so easy to do, and as we are so much tempted to do, we look rather at the power and fury of those terrible and destructive elements than at Him who can help and save—then we, too, shall inevitably sink. Oh, if we feel, often and often, that the water-floods threaten to drown us, and the deep to swallow up the tossed vessel of our Church and faith, may it again and again be granted us to hear amid the storm and the darkness, and the voices prophesying war, those two sweetest of the Saviour’s utterances—“Fear not. Only believe.” “It is I. Be not afraid.”

## Chapter 18

### AMONG THE HEATHEN

Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the regions of Tyre and Sidon.

SUCH is the brief notice which prefaces the few and scanty records of a period of His life and work of which, had it been vouchsafed to us, we should have been deeply interested to learn something more. But only a single incident of this visit to heathendom has been recorded. It might have seemed that in that distant region there would be a certainty, not of safety only, but even of repose; but it was not so. We have already seen traces that the fame of His miracles had penetrated even to the old Phoenician cities, and no sooner had He reached their neighborhood than it became evident that He could not be hid. A woman sought for Him, and followed the little company of wayfarers with passionate entreaties—"Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."

We might have imagined that our Lord would answer such a prayer with immediate and tender approbation, and all the more because, in granting her petition, He would symbolically have been representing the extension of His kingdom to the three greatest branches of the pagan world. For this woman was by birth a Canaanite, and a Syro-Phoenician; by position a Roman subject; by culture and language a Greek; and her appeal for mercy to the Messiah of the Chosen People might well look like the firstfruits of the har-

vest in which the good seed should spring up hereafter in Tyre and Sidon, and Carthage, and Greece, and Rome. But Jesus—and is not this one of the numberless indications that we are dealing not with loose and false tradition, but with solid fact?—"Jesus answered her not a word."

In no other single instance are we told of a similar apparent coldness on the part of Christ; nor are we here informed of the causes which influenced His actions. Two alone suggest themselves: He may have desired to test the feelings of His disciples, who, in the narrow spirit of Judaic exclusiveness, might be unprepared to see Him grant His blessings not only to a Gentile but a Canaanite, and descendant of the accursed race. It was true that He had healed the servant of the centurion, but he was perhaps a Roman, certainly a benefactor to the Jews, and in all probability a proselyte of the gate. But it is more likely that, knowing what would follow, He may have desired to test yet further the woman's faith, both that He might crown it with a more complete and glorious reward, and that she might learn something deeper respecting Him than the mere Jewish title that she may have accidentally picked up. And further than this, since every miracle is also rich in moral significance, He may have wished for all time to encourage us in our prayers and hopes, and teach us to persevere, even when it might seem that His face is dark to us, or that His ear is turned away.

Weary with the importunity of her cries, the disciples begged Him to send her away. But, as if even their intercession would be unavailing, He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Then she came and fell at His feet, and began to worship Him, saying, "Lord, help me." Could He indeed remain untouched by that sorrow? Could He reject that appeal, and would He leave her to return to the lifelong agony of watching the paroxysms of her demoniac child? Calmly and coldly came from those lips, that never yet had an-

swered with anything but mercy to a suppliant's prayer—"It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs."

Such an answer might well have struck a chill into her soul; and had he not foreseen that hers was the rare trust which can see mercy and acceptance even in apparent rejection, He would not so have answered her. But not all the snows of her native Lebanon could quench the fire of love which was burning on the altar of her heart, and prompt as an echo came forth the glorious and immortal answer—"Truth, Lord; then let me share the condition not of the children but of the dogs, for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

She had triumphed and more than triumphed. Not one moment longer did her Lord prolong the agony of her suspense. "O woman," He exclaimed, "great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And with his usual beautiful and graphic simplicity Mark ends the narrative with the touching words, "And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed."

How long our Lord remained in these regions, and at what spot He stayed, we do not know. Probably His departure was hastened by the publicity which attended His movements even there, and which—in a region where it had been His object quietly to train His own nearest and most beloved followers, and not either to preach or to work deeds of mercy—would only impede His work. He therefore left that interesting land.

The reception of Jesus in this semipagan district seems to have been favorable. Wherever He went He was unable to abstain from exercising His miraculous powers in favor of the sufferers for whom His aid was sought; and in one of these cities He was entreated to heal a man who was deaf, and could scarcely speak. He might have healed him by word, but there were evidently circumstances in his case which

rendered it desirable to make the cure gradual, and to effect it by visible signs. He took the man aside, put His fingers in his ears, and spat, and touched His tongue, and then Mark preserves for us the sigh, and the uplifted glance, as He spoke the one word, "Ephphatha! Be opened!" Here again it is not revealed to us what were the immediate influences which saddened His spirit. He may have sighed in pity for the man; He may have sighed in pity for the race; He may have sighed for all the sins that degrade and all the sufferings that torture; but certainly He sighed in a spirit of deep tenderness and compassion, and certainly the sigh ascended like an infinite intercession into the ears of the Lord God of Hosts.

The multitudes of that outlying region, unfamiliar with His miracles, were beyond measure astonished. His injunction of secrecy was as usual disregarded, and all hope of seclusion was at an end. The cure had apparently been wrought in close vicinity to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, and great multitudes followed Jesus to the summit of a hill overlooking the lake, and there bringing their lame, and blind, and maimed, and dumb, they laid them at the feet of the Good Physician, and He healed them all. Filled with intense and joyful amazement, these people of Decapolis could not tear themselves from His presence, and—semi-pagans as they were—they "glorified the God of Israel."

## Chapter 19

### THE GREAT CONFESSIONS

VERY different was the reception which awaited Jesus on the farther shore. The poor heathens of Decapolis had welcomed Him with reverent enthusiasm: the haughty Pharisees of Jerusalem met Him with sneering hate. It may be that, after this period of absence, His human soul yearned for the only resting place which He could call a home. Entering into His little vessel, He sailed across the lake to Magdala. It is probable that He purposely avoided sailing to Bethsaida or Capernaum, which are a little north of Magdala, and which had become the headquarters of the hostile Pharisees. But it seems that these personages had kept a lookout for His arrival. As though they had been watching from the tower of Magdala for the sail of His returning vessel, barely had He set foot on shore than they came to meet Him. Nor were they alone: this time they were accompanied — ill-omened conjunction! — with their rivals and enemies the Sadducees, that sceptical sect, half religious, half political, to which at this time belonged the two high priests, as well as the members of the reigning family. Every section of the ruling classes—the Pharisees, formidable from their religious weight among the people; the Sadducees, few in number, but powerful from wealth and position; the Herodians, representing the influence of the Romans, and of their nominees the tetrarchs; the scribes and lawyers, bringing to bear the authority of their orthodoxy and their learn-

ing—were all united against Him in one firm phalanx of conspiracy and opposition, and were determined above all things to hinder His preaching, and to alienate from Him, so far as was practicable, the affections of the people among whom most of His mighty works were done.

They had already found by experience that the one most effectual weapon to discredit His mission and undermine His influence was the demand of a sign—above all, a sign from heaven. If He were indeed the Messiah, why should He not give them bread from heaven as Moses, they said, had done? Where were Samuel's thunder and Elijah's flame? Why should not the sun be darkened, and the moon turned into blood, and the stars of heaven be shaken? Why should not some fiery pillar glide before them to victory, or the burst of some stormy *Bath Kol* ratify His words?

They knew that no such sign would be granted them, and they knew that He had vouchsafed to them the strongest reasons for His thrice-repeated refusal to gratify their presumptuous and unspiritual demand. Had they known or understood the fact of His temptation in the wilderness, they would have known that His earliest answers to the tempter were uttered in this very spirit of utter self-abnegation. Had He granted their request, what purpose would have been furthered?

But in spite of all this, the Pharisees and Sadducees felt that for the present this refusal to gratify their demand gave them a handle against Jesus, and was an effectual engine for weakening the admiration of the people. Yet not for one moment did He hesitate in rejecting this their temptation. He would not work any epideictic miracle at their bidding, any more than at the bidding of the tempter. He at once told them, as He told them before, that "no sign should be given them but the sign of the prophet Jonah." Pointing to the western sky, now crimson with the deepening hues of sunset, He said, "When it is evening, ye say, Fair weather! for the sky is red; and in the morning, Storm



today, for the sky is red and frowning. Hypocrites! ye know how to discern the face of the sky: can ye not learn the signs of the times?"

As He spoke He heaved a deep inward sigh. For some time He had been absent from home. He had been sought out with trustful faith in the regions of Tyre and Sidon. He had been welcomed with ready gratitude in heathen Decapolis; here, at home, He was met with the flaunt of triumphant opposition, under the guise of hypocritic zeal. He steps ashore on the lovely plain, where He had done so many noble and tender deeds, and spoken for all time such transcendent and immortal words. He came back, haply to work once more in the little district where His steps had once been followed by rejoicing thousands, hanging in deep silence on every word He spoke. As He approaches Magdala, the little village destined for all time to lend its name to a word expressive of His most divine compassion—as He wishes to enter once more the little cities and villages which offered to His homelessness the only shadow of a home—here, barely has He stepped upon the pebbly strand, barely passed through the fringe of flowering shrubs which embroider the water's edge, barely listened to the twittering of the innumerable birds which welcome Him back with their familiar sounds, when He finds all the self-satisfied hypocrisies of a decadent religion drawn up in array to stop His path.

He did not press His mercies on those who rejected them. As in after-days His nation were suffered to prefer their robber and their murderer to the Lord of Life, so now the Galileans were suffered to keep their Pharisees and lose their Christ. He left them as He had left the Gadarenes—rejected, not suffered to rest even in His home; with heavy heart, solemnly and sadly he left them—left them then and there—left them, to revisit, indeed, once more their neighborhood, but never again to return publicly—never again to work miracles, to teach or preach.

It must have been late in that autumn evening when He stepped once more into the little ship, and bade His disciples steer their course towards Bethsaida Julias, at the northern end of the lake.

At Bethsaida Julias, probably on the following morning, a blind man was brought to Him for healing. The cure was wrought in a manner very similar to that of the deaf and dumb man in Decapolis. It has none of the ready freedom, the radiant spontaneity of the earlier and happier miracles. In one respect it differs from every other recorded miracle, for it was, as it were, tentative. Jesus took the man by the hand, led him out of the village, spat upon his eyes, and then, laying His hands upon them, asked if he saw. The man looked at the figures in the distance, and, but imperfectly cured as yet, said, "I see men as trees walking." Not until Jesus had laid His hands a second time upon his eyes did he see clearly. And then Jesus bade him go to his house, which was not at Bethsaida; for, with an emphatic repetition of the word, he is forbidden either to enter into the town or to tell it to anyone in the town.

Leaving Bethsaida Julius, Jesus made His way towards Caesarea Philippi. Here, again, it seems to be distinctly intimated that He did not enter into the town itself, but only visited the "coasts" of it, or wandered about the neighboring villages.

It was on His way to the northern region that there occurred an incident which may well be regarded as the culminating point of His earthly ministry. He was alone. The crowd that surged so tumultuously about Him in more frequented district here only followed Him at a distance. Only His disciples were near Him as He stood apart in solitary prayer. And when the prayer was over, He beckoned them about Him as they continued their journey, and asked them those two momentous questions on the answers to which depended the whole outcome of His work on earth.

First He asked them, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?"

The answer was a sad one. The apostles dared not and would not speak aught but the words of soberness and truth, and they made the disheartening admission that the Messiah had not been recognized by the world which He came to save. They could only repeat the idle guesses of the people. Some, echoing the verdict of the guilty conscience of Antipas, said that He was John the Baptist; some, who may have heard the sterner denunciations of His impassioned grief, caught in that mighty utterance the thunder-tones of a new Elijah; others, who had listened to His accents of tenderness and words of universal love, saw in Him the plaintive soul of Jeremiah, and thought that He had come, perhaps, to restore them the lost Urim and the vanished Ark: many looked on Him as a prophet and a precursor. None—in spite of an occasional Messianic cry wrung from the admiration of the multitude, amazed by some unwonted display of power—none dreamt of who He was. The light had shone in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.

"But whom say ye that I am?"

Had that great question been answered otherwise—could it have been answered otherwise—the world's whole destinies might have been changed. Had it been answered otherwise, then, humanly speaking, so far the mission of the Saviour would have wholly failed, and Christianity and Christendom have never been. For the work of Christ on earth lay mainly with His disciples. He sowed the seed; they reaped the harvest. He had never openly spoken of His Messiahship. John indeed had borne witness to Him, and to those who could receive it He had indirectly intimated, both in word and deed, that He was the Son of God. But it was His will that the light of revelation should dawn gradually on the minds of His children; that it should spring more from the truths He spake and the life He lived than from the wonders which He wrought; that it should be conveyed not in

sudden thunder-crashes of supernatural majesty or visions of unutterable glory but through the quiet medium of a sinless and self-sacrificing course. It was in the Son of Man that they were to recognize the Son of God.

But the answer came, as from everlasting it had been written in the book of destiny that it should come; and Peter, the ever warmhearted, the coryphaeus of the apostolic choir, had the immortal honor of giving it utterance for them all—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God!"

Such an answer from the chief of the apostles atoned by its fullness of insight and certitude of conviction for the defective appreciation of the multitudes. It showed that at last the great mystery was revealed which had been hidden from the ages and the generations. The apostles at least had not only recognized in Jesus of Nazareth the promised Messiah of their nation, but it had been revealed to them by the special grace of God that that Messiah was not only what the Jews expected, a Prince, and a Ruler, and a son of David, but was *more* than this, even the Son of the Living God.

With awful solemnity did the Saviour ratify that great confession. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter [*Petros*], and on this rock [*petra*] I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Never did even the lips of Jesus utter more memorable words. It was His own testimony of Himself. It was the promise that they who can acknowledge it are blessed. It was the revealed fact that they only can acknowledge it who are led thereto by the Spirit of God. It told mankind forever that not by earthly criticisms, but only by heavenly grace, can the full knowledge of that truth be obtained. It was the laying of the cornerstone of the Church of Christ, and the

earliest occasion on which was uttered that memorable word, thereafter to be so intimately blended with the history of the world. It was the promise that that Church founded on the rock of inspired confession should remain unconquered by all the powers of hell. It was the conferring upon that Church, in the person of its typical representative, the power to open and shut, to bind and loose, and the promise that the power faithfully expressed on earth should be finally ratified in heaven.

It may be said that from that time forth the Saviour might regard one great portion of His work on earth as having been accomplished. His apostles were now convinced of the mystery of His being; the foundations were laid on which, with Himself as the chief cornerstone, the whole vast edifice was to be hereafter built.

But He forebade them to reveal this truth as yet. The time for such preaching had not yet come. They were yet wholly ignorant of the true method of His manifestation. They were yet too unconfirmed in faith even to remain true to Him in His hour of utmost need. As yet He would be known as the Christ to those only whose spiritual insight could see Him immediately in His life and in His works. As yet He would neither strive nor cry, nor should His voice be heard in the streets. When their own faith was confirmed beyond all wavering by the mighty fact of His resurrection, when their hearts had been filled with the new Shechinah of God's Holy Spirit, and their brows, with final consecration, had been mitred with Pentecostal flame, then, but not till then, would the hour have come for them to go forth and teach all nations that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Therefore, He began, calmly and deliberately, to reveal to them His intended journey to Jerusalem, His rejection by the leaders of His nation, the anguish and insult that awaited Him, His violent death, His resurrection on the third day. He had, indeed, on previous occasions given them divers and

distant intimations of these approaching sufferings, but now for the first time He dwelt on them distinctly, and that with full freedom of speech. Yet even now He did not reveal in its entire awfulness the manner of His approaching death. He made known unto them, indeed, that He should be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes—by all the authorities, and dignities, and sanctities of the nation—but not that He should be delivered to the Gentiles. He warned them that He should be killed, but He reserved till the time of His last journey to Jerusalem the horrible fact that He should be crucified. He thus revealed to them the future only as they were best able to bear it, and even then, to console their anguish and to support their faith, He told them quite distinctly that on the third day He should rise again.

But the human mind has a singular capacity for rejecting that which it cannot comprehend—for ignoring and forgetting all that does not fall within the range of its previous conceptions. The apostles, ever faithful and ever simple in their testimony, never conceal from us their dullness of spiritual insight, nor the dominance of Judaic preconceptions over their minds. They themselves confess to us how sometimes they took the literal for the figurative, and sometimes the figurative for the literal. They heard the announcement, but they did not realize it. "They understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not." Now as on so many other occasions a supernatural awe was upon them, "and they feared to ask Him." The prediction of His end was so completely alien from their whole habit of thought that they would only put it aside as irrelevant and unintelligible—some mystery which they could not fathom; and as regards the Resurrection, when it was again prophesied to the most spiritual among them all, they could only question among one another what the rising from the dead should mean.

But Peter, in his impetuosity, thought that he understood and thought that he could prevent; and so he interrupted

those solemn utterances by his ignorant and presumptuous zeal. The sense that it had been given to him to perceive and utter a new and mighty truth, together with the splendid eulogium and promise which he had just received, combined to inflate his intellect and misguide his heart; and taking Jesus by the hand or by the robe, he led Him a step or two aside from the disciples, and began to advise, to instruct, to rebuke his Lord. "God forbid," he said; "this shall certainly *not* happen to thee." With a flash of sudden indignation our Lord rebuked his worldliness and presumption. Turning away from him, fixing His eyes on the other disciples and speaking in the hearing of them all—for it was fit that they who had heard the words of vast promise should hear also the crushing rebuke—He exclaimed, "Get thee behind Me, Satan! Thou art a stumbling block unto Me; for thy thoughts are not the thoughts of God, but of men." "This thy mere carnal and human view—this attempt to dissuade Me from My 'baptism of death'—is a sin against the purposes of God." Peter was to learn—would that the Church which professes to have inherited from him its exclusive and superhuman claims had also learnt in time!—that he was far indeed from being infallible—that he was capable of falling, aye, and with scarcely a moment's intermission, from heights of divine insight into depths of most earthly folly.

But having thus warned and rebuked the ignorant affection of unspiritual effeminacy in His presumptuous apostle, the Lord graciously made the incident an occasion for some of His deepest teaching which He not only addressed to His disciples but to all. We learn quite incidentally from Mark that even in these remote regions His footsteps were sometimes followed by attendant crowds, who usually walked at a little distance from Him and His disciples but were sometimes called to Him to hear the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And alike they and His disciples were as yet infected with the false notions which had inspired the impetuous interference of Peter. To them, there-

fore, He addressed the words which have taught us forever that the essence of all highest duty, the meaning of all truest life—like the most acceptable service to God and the most ennobling example to men—is involved in the law of self-sacrifice. It was on this occasion that He spoke those few words which have produced so infinite an effect on the conscience of mankind. "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" And then, after warning them that He should Himself be judged, He consoled them under the shock of unexpected revelation by the assurance that there were some standing there who should not taste of death till they had seen the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. If, as all Scripture shows, "the kingdom of the Son of Man" be understood in a sense primarily spiritual, then there can be no difficulty in understanding this prophecy in the sense that, ere all of them passed away, the foundations of that kingdom should have been established forever in the abolition of the old and the establishment of the new dispensation. Three of them were immediately to see Him transfigured; all but one were to be witnesses of His resurrection; one at least—the Beloved Disciple—was to survive that capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple which were to render impossible any literal fulfillment of the Mosaic law. And the prophecy may have deeper meanings yet than these—meanings still more real because they are still more wholly spiritual. "If we wish not to fear death," says Ambrose, "let us stand where Christ is; Christ is your Life; He is the very Life which cannot die."



## Chapter 20

### THE TRANSFIGURATION

It was the evening hour when He ascended, and as He climbed the hill-slope with those three chosen witnesses—"the Sons of Thunder and the Man of Rock"—doubtless a solemn gladness dilated His whole soul; a sense not only of the heavenly calm which that solitary communion with His Heavenly Father would breathe upon the spirit, but still more than this, a sense that He would be supported for the coming hour by ministrations not of earth, and illuminated with a light which needed no aid from sun or moon or stars. He went up to be prepared for death, and He took His three apostles with Him that, haply, having seen His glory—the glory of the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth—their hearts might be fortified, their faith strengthened to gaze unshaken on the shameful insults and unspeakable humiliation of the cross.

There, then, He knelt and prayed, and as He prayed He was elevated far above the toil and misery of the world which had rejected Him. He was transfigured before them, and His countenance shone as the sun, and His garments became white as the dazzling snowfields above them. He was enwrapped in such an aureole of glistening brilliance—His whole presence breathed so divine a radiance—that the light, the snow, the lightning are the only things to which the Evangelist can compare that celestial luster. And, lo, two figures were by His side. "When, in the desert, He was girding Him-

self for the work of life, angels of life came and ministered unto Him; now, in the fair world, when He is girding Himself for the work of death, the ministrants come to Him from the grave—but from the grave conquered—one from that tomb under Abarim, which His own hand had sealed long ago; the other from the rest into which He had entered without seeing corruption. There stood by Him Moses and Elias, and spake of His decease. And when the prayer is ended, the task accepted, then first since the star paused over Him at Bethlehem, the full glory falls upon Him from heaven, and the testimony is borne to His everlasting sonship and power—“Hear ye Him.”

It is clear, from the fuller narrative of Luke, that the three apostles did not witness the beginning of this marvelous transfiguration. An Oriental, when his prayers are over, wraps himself in his *abba*, and lying down on the grass in the open air, sinks in a moment into profound sleep. And the apostles, as afterward they slept at Gethsemane, so now they slept on Hermon. They were heavy, “weighted down,” with sleep, when suddenly starting into full wakefulness of spirit, they saw and heard.

In the darkness of the night, shedding an intense gleam over the mountain herbage, shone the glorified form of their Lord. Beside Him, in the same flood of golden glory, were two awful shapes, which they knew or heard to be Moses and Elijah. And the Three spake together, in the stillness, of that coming decease at Jerusalem, about which they had just been forewarned by Christ.

And as the splendid vision began to fade—as the majestic visitors were about to be separated from their Lord, as their Lord Himself passed with them into the overshadowing brightness—Peter anxious to delay their presence, amazed, startled, transported, not knowing what he said—not knowing that Calvary would be a spectacle infinitely more transcendent than Hermon—not knowing that the Law and the Prophets were now fulfilled—not fully knowing that his Lord was

unspeakably greater than the Prophet of Sinai and the Avenger of Carmel—exclaimed, “Rabbi, it is best for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” Jesus might have smiled at the naive proposal of the eager apostle, that they six should dwell forever in a little soccoth of wattled boughs on the slopes of Hermon. But it was not for Peter to construct the universe for his personal satisfaction. He had to learn the meaning of Calvary no less than that of Hermon. Not in cloud of glory or chariot of fire was Jesus to pass away from them, but with arms outstretched in agony upon the accursed tree; not between Moses and Elias, but between two thieves, who “were crucified with Him, on either side one.”

No answer was vouchsafed to his wild and dreamy words; but, even as he spake, a cloud—not a cloud of thick darkness as at Sinai, but a cloud of light, a Shechinah of radiance—overshadowed them, and a voice from out of it uttered, “This is my beloved Son; hear Him.” They fell prostrate, and hid their faces on the grass. And as—awakening from the overwhelming shock of that awful voice, of that enfolding Light—they raised their eyes and gazed suddenly all around them, they found that all was over. The bright cloud had vanished. The lightninglike gleams of shining countenances and dazzling robes had passed away; they were alone with Jesus and only the stars rained their quiet luster on the mountain slopes.

As first they were afraid to rise or stir, but Jesus, their Master—as they had seen Him before He knelt in prayer, came to them, touched them—said, “Arise, and be not afraid.”

And so the day dawned on Hermon, and they descended the hill; and as they descended, He bade them tell no man until He had risen from the dead. The vision was for them; it was to be pondered over by them in the depths of their own hearts in self-denying reticence; to announce it to their

fellow disciples might only awake their jealousy and their own self-satisfaction; until the Resurrection it would add nothing to the faith of others, and might only confuse their conceptions of what was to be His work on earth. They kept Christ's command, but they could not attach any meaning to this allusion. They could only ask each other, or muse in silence, what this resurrection from the dead could mean.

## Chapter 21

### IN BETHANY

NOWHERE, in all probability, did Jesus pass more restful and happy hours than in the quiet house of that little family at Bethany, which, as we are told by John, "He loved." The family, so far as we know, consisted only of Martha, Mary, and their brother Lazarus. The lonely little hamlet, lying among its peaceful uplands, near Jerusalem, and yet completely hidden from it by the summit of Olivet, must always have had for the soul of Jesus an especial charm; and the more so because of the friends whose love and reverence always placed at His disposal their holy and happy home. It is there that we find Him on the eve of the Feast of the Dedication, which marked the close of that public journey designed for the full and final proclamation of His coming kingdom.

It was natural that there should be some stir in the little household at the coming of such a Guest, and Martha, the busy, eager-hearted, affectionate hostess, "on hospitable thoughts intent," hurried to and fro with excited energy to prepare for His proper entertainment. Her sister Mary, too, was anxious to receive Him fittingly, but her notions of the reverence due Him were of a different kind. Knowing that her sister was only too happy to do all that could be done for His material comfort, she, in deep humility, sat at His feet and listened to His words.

Mary was not to blame, for her sister evidently enjoyed the task which she had chosen of providing as best she could

for the claims of hospitality, and was quite able, without any assistance, to do everything that was required. Nor was Martha to blame for her active service; her sole fault was that, in this outward activity, she lost the necessary equilibrium of an inward calm. As she toiled and planned to serve Him, a little touch of jealousy disturbed her peace as she saw her quiet sister sitting—"idly" she may have thought—at the feet of their great Visitor, and leaving the trouble to fall on her. If she had taken time to think, she could not but have acknowledged that there may have been as much of consideration as of selfishness in Mary's withdrawal into the background in their domestic administration, but to be just and noble-minded is always difficult, nor is it even possible when any one meanness, such as petty jealousy, is suffered to intrude. So, in the first blush of her vexation, Martha, instead of gently asking her sister to help her, if help, indeed, were needed—an appeal which, if we judge of Mary aright, she would instantly have heard—she almost impatiently, and not quite reverently, hurries in, and asks Jesus if He really did not care to see her sister sitting there with her hands before her, while she was left singlehanded to do all the work. Would He not tell her (Martha could not have fairly added that common piece of ill-nature, "It is of no use for me to tell her") to go and help?

An imperfect soul, seeing what is good and great and true, but very often failing in the attempt to attain to it, is apt to be very hard in its judgments on the shortcomings of others. But a divine and sovereign soul—a soul that has more nearly attained to the measure of the stature of the perfect man—takes a calmer and gentler, because a larger-hearted view of those little weaknesses and indirectnesses which it cannot but daily see. And so the answer of Jesus, if it were a reproof, was at any rate an infinitely gentle and tender one, and one which would purify but would not pain the poor faithful heart of the busy, loving matron to whom

it was addressed. "Martha, Martha," so He said — and as we hear that most natural address may we not imagine the half-sad, half-playful, but wholly kind and healing smile which lightened His face?—"thou art anxious and bustling about many things, whereas but one thing is needful; but Mary chose for herself the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Jesus did not mean to reprobate any amount of work undertaken in His service, but only the spirit of fret and fuss—the want of all repose and calm—the ostentation of superfluous hospitality—in doing it; and still more that tendency to reprobate and interfere with others, which is so often seen in Christians who are as anxious as Martha, but have none of Mary's holy truthfulness and perfect calm.

## Chapter 22

### THE LAST STAY IN PEREA

WHEREVER the ministry of Jesus was in the slightest degree public, there we invariably find the Pharisees watching, lying in wait for Him, tempting Him, trying to entrap Him into some mistaken judgment or ruinous decision. But perhaps even their malignity never framed a question to which the answer was so beset with difficulties as when they came to "tempt" Him with the problem "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"

The question was beset with difficulties on every side, and for many reasons. In the first place, the institution of Moses on the subject was ambiguously expressed. Then this had given rise to a decided opposition of opinion between the two most important and flourishing of the rabbinic schools. The difference of the schools had resulted in a difference in the customs of the nation. Lastly the theological, scholastic, ethical, and national difficulties were further complicated by political ones, for the prince in whose domain the question was asked was deeply interested in the answer, and had already put to death the greatest of the prophets for his bold expression of the view which was most hostile to his own practice. Whatever the truckling rabbis of Galilee might do, John the Baptist, at least, had left no shadow of a doubt as to what was his interpretation of the Law of Moses, and he had paid the penalty of his frankness with his life.

Moses had laid down the rule that when a man had married a wife, and "she find no favor in his eyes because, he



hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife."

Jesus was never guided in any of His answers by principles of expediency, and was decidedly indifferent alike to the anger of multitudes and to the tyrant's frown. His only object was to give, even to such inquirers as these, such answers as should elevate them to a nobler sphere. Their axiom "Is it lawful?" had it been sincere, would have involved the answer to their own question. Nothing is lawful to any man who doubts its lawfulness. Jesus, therefore, instead of answering them, directs them to the source where the true answer was to be found. Setting the primitive order side by side with the Mosaic institution—meeting their "Is it lawful?" with "Have ye not read?"—He reminds them that God, Who at the beginning had made man male and female, had thereby signified His will that marriage should be the closest and most indissoluble of all relationships—transcending and even, if necessary, superseding all the rest.

"Why, then," they ask—eager to entangle Him in an opposition to "the fiery law"—"did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement and put her away?" The form of their question involved one of those false turns so common among the worshipers of the letter; and on this false turn they based their inverted pyramid of yet falser inferences. And so Jesus at once corrected them: "Moses, indeed, for your hardheartedness permitted you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so"; and then He adds as formal and fearless a condemnation of Herod Antipas—without naming him—as could have been put in language, "Whoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another, except for fornication, committeth adultery; and he who marrieth the divorced woman committeth adultery": and Herod's case was the worst conceivable instance of both forms of adultery, for he, while married to an innocent and undivorced wife,

had wedded the guilty but still undivorced wife of Herod Philip, his own brother and host; and he had done this, without the shadow of any excuse, out of mere guilty passion, when his own prime of life and that of his paramour was already past.

The Pharisees, baffled, perplexed, ashamed as usual, found themselves again confronted by a transcendently loftier wisdom, and a transcendently diviner insight, than their own, and retired to hatch fresh plots equally malicious, and destined to be equally futile. But nothing can more fully show the necessity of Christ's teaching than the fact that even the disciples were startled and depressed by it. In this bad age, when corruption was so universal—when in Rome marriage had fallen into such contempt and desuitude that a law had to be passed which rendered celibates liable to a fine—they thought the pure strictness of our Lord's precept so severe that celibacy itself seemed preferable; and this opinion they expressed when they were once more with Him in the house. What a fatal blow would have been given to the world's happiness and the world's morality had He assented to their rash conclusion! And how marvelous a proof is it of His divinity that whereas every other pre-eminent moral teacher—even the very best and greatest of all—has uttered or sanctioned more than one dangerous and deadly error which has been potent to poison the life or peace of nations—all the words of the Lord Jesus were absolutely holy, and divinely healthy words. In His reply He gives none of that entire preference to celibacy which would have been so highly valued by the ascetic and the monk, and would have troubled the consciences of many millions whose union has been blessed by heaven. He refused to pronounce upon the condition of the celibate so absolute a sanction. All that He said was that this saying of theirs as to the undesirability of marriage had no such unqualified bearing; that it was impossible and undesirable for all but the rare and exceptional few. Some, indeed, there were who were unfitted for holy

wedlock by the circumstances of their birth or constitution; some, again, by the infamous, though then common, cruelties and atrocities of the dominant slavery; and some who withdrew themselves from all thoughts of marriage for religious purposes, or in consequence of higher necessities. These were not better than others, but only different. It was the duty of some to marry and serve God in the wedded state; it might be the duty of others not to marry, and so to serve God in the celibate state.

And then, like a touching and beautiful comment on these high words, and the strongest of all proofs that there was in the mind of Christ no admiration for the "voluntary service" which Paul condemns, and the "works of supererogation" which an erring Church upholds—as a proof of His belief that marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled—He took part in a scene that has charmed the imagination of poet and painter in every age. For as though to destroy all false and unnatural notions of the exceptional glory of religious virginity, He, among whose earliest acts it had been to bless a marriage festival, made it one of His latest acts to fondle infants in His arms. It seems to have been known in Perea that the time of His departure was approaching; and conscious, perhaps, of the words which He had just been uttering, there were fathers and mothers and friends who brought to Him the fruits of holy wedlock— young children and even babes—that He might touch them and pray over them. Ere He left them forever, they would bid Him a solemn farewell; they would win, as it were, the legacy of His special blessing for the generation yet to come. The disciples thought their conduct forward and officious. They did not wish their Master to be needlessly crowded and troubled; they did not like to be disturbed in their high colloquies. They were indignant that a number of mere women and children should come obtruding on more important persons and interests.

He turned the rebuke of the disciples on themselves; He

was as much displeased with them, as they had been with the parents and children. "Suffer the little children," He said, in words which each of the Synoptists has preserved for us in all their immortal tenderness—"Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And when He had folded them in His arms, laid His hands upon them and blessed them, He added once more His constantly needed, and therefore constantly repeated, warning, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child shall not enter therein."

When this beautiful and deeply instructive scene was over, Matthew tells us that He started on His way, probably for that new journey to the other Bethany; and on this road occurred another incident, which impressed itself so deeply on the minds of the spectators that it, too, has been recorded by the Evangelists in a triple narrative.

A young man of great wealth and high position seems suddenly to have been seized with a conviction that he had hitherto neglected an invaluable opportunity, and that One who could alone explain to him the true meaning and mystery of life was already on His way to depart from among them. Determined, therefore, not to be too late, he came running, breathless, eager—in a way that surprised all who beheld it—and prostrating himself before the feet of Jesus, exclaimed, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit life?"

If there was something attractive in the mingled impetuosity and humility of one so young and distinguished, yet so candid and earnest, there was in his question much that was objectionable. The notion that he could gain eternal life by "doing some good thing" rested on a basis radically false. If we may combine what seems to be the true reading of Matthew with the answer recorded in the other Evangelists, our Lord seems to have said to him, "Why askest thou Me about the good? and why callest thou Me good? One is good,

even God." He would as little accept the title "Good" as He would accept the title "Messiah," when given in a false sense. He would not be regarded as that mere "good Rabbi," to which, in these days, more than ever men would reduce Him. So far, Jesus would show the youth that when he came to Him as to one who was more than man, his entire address, as well as his entire question, was a mistake. No mere man can lay any other foundation than that which is laid, and if the ruler committed the error of simply admiring Jesus as a rabbi of pre-eminent sanctity, yet no rabbi, however, saintly, was accustomed to receive the title of "good," or prescribe any amulet for the preservation of a virtuous life. And in the same spirit, He continued, "But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

The youth had not expected a reply so obvious and so simple. He cannot believe that he is merely referred to the Ten Commandments, and so he asks, in surprise, "What sort of commandments?" Jesus, as the youth wanted to *do* something, tells him merely of those of the Second Table, for, as has been well remarked, "Christ sends the proud to the law, and invites the humble to the Gospel." "Master," replied the young man in surprise, "all these have I observed from my youth." Doubtless in the mere letter he may have done so, as millions have; but he evidently knew little of all that those commandments had been interpreted by Christ to mean. And Jesus, seeing his sincerity, looking on him loved him, and gave him one short crucial test of his real condition. He was not content with the commonplace; he aspired after the heroical, or, rather, *thought* that he did; therefore Jesus gave him an heroic act to do. "One thing," He said, "thou lackest," and bade him go, sell all that he had, distribute it to the poor, and come and follow Him.

It was too much. The young ruler went away very sorrowful, grief in his heart, and a cloud upon his brow, for he had great possessions. He preferred the comforts of earth to the treasures of heaven.

## Chapter 23

### THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

THESE farewell interviews and teachings perhaps belong to the two days after Jesus had received from the other Bethany, where He had so often found a home, the solemn message that "he whom He loved was sick." Lazarus was the one intimate personal friend whom Jesus possessed outside the circle of His apostles, and the urgent message was evidently an appeal for the presence of Him in whose presence, so far as we know, there had never been a deathbed scene.

But Jesus did not come. He contented Himself—occupied as He was in important works—with sending them the message that "this sickness was not to death, but for the glory of God," and stayed two days longer where He was. And at the end of those two days He said to His disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." The disciples reminded Him how lately the Jews had there sought to stone Him, and asked Him how He could venture to go there again; but His answer was that during the twelve hours of His day of work He could walk in safety, for the light of His duty, which was the will of His Heavenly Father, would keep Him from danger. And then He told them that Lazarus slept, and that He was going to wake him out of sleep. Three of them at least must have remembered how, on another memorable occasion, He had spoken of death as sleep; but either they were silent, and others spoke, or they were too slow of heart to remember it. As they understood Him to speak of natural

sleep, He had to tell them plainly that Lazarus was dead, and that He was glad of it for their sakes, for that He would go to restore him to life. "Let us also go," said the affectionate but ever despondent Thomas, "that we may die with Him"—as though he had said, "It is all a useless and perilous scheme, but still let us go."

Starting early in the morning, Jesus could easily have accomplished the distance—some twenty miles—before sunset. But, on His arrival, He stayed outside the little village. Its vicinity to Jerusalem, from which it is not two miles distant, and the evident wealth and position of the family, had attracted a large concourse of distinguished Jews to console and mourn with the sisters; and it was obviously desirable to act with caution in venturing among such determined enemies. But while Mary, true to her retiring and contemplative disposition, was sitting in the house, unconscious of her Lord's approach, the more active Martha had received intelligence that He was near at hand, and immediately went forth to meet Him. Lazarus had died on the very day that Jesus received the message of his illness; two days had elapsed while He lingered in Perea; a fourth had been spent in journey. Martha could not understand this sad delay. "Lord," she said, in tones gently reproachful, "if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died," yet "even now" she seems to indulge the vague hope that some alleviation may be vouchsafed to their bereavement. The few words which follow are words of most memorable import—a declaration of Jesus which has brought comfort not to Martha only but to millions since, and which shall do to millions more unto the world's end—"Thy brother shall rise again."

Martha evidently had not dreamt that he would now be awaked from the sleep of death, and she could only answer, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said unto her, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on Me, though he have died, shall live; and

He that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

It was not for a spirit like Martha's to distinguish the interchanging thoughts of physical and spiritual death which were united in that deep utterance; but, without pausing to fathom it, her faithful love supplied the answer, "Yes, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

Having uttered that great confession, she at once went in quest of her sister, about whom Jesus had already inquired, and whose heart and intellect, as Martha seemed instinctively to feel, were better adapted to embrace such lofty truths. She found Mary in the house, and both the secrecy with which she delivered her message and the haste and silence with which Mary arose to go and meet her Lord show that precaution was needed, and that the visit of Jesus had not been unaccompanied with danger. The Jews who were comforting her, and whom she had thus suddenly left, rose to follow her to the tomb, whither they thought that she had gone to weep; but they soon saw the real object of her movement. Outside the village they found Jesus surrounded by His friends and they saw Mary hurry up to Him, and fling herself at His feet with the same agonizing reproach which her sister also had used, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died." The greater intensity of her emotion spoke in her fewer words and her greater self-abandonment of anguish, and she could add no more. The sight of all that love and misery, the pitiable spectacle of human bereavement, the utter futility at such a moment of human consolation, the shrill commingling of a hired and simulated lamentation with all this genuine anguish, the unspoken reproach, "Oh, why didst Thou not come at once and snatch the victim from the enemy, and spare Thy friend from the sting of death, and us from the more bitter sting of such a parting?"—all these influences touched the tender compassion of Jesus with deep emotion. A strong effort of self-repression was



needed — an effort which shook His whole frame with a powerful shudder—before He could find words to speak, and then He could merely ask, “Where have ye laid him?” They said, “Lord, come and see.” As He followed them His eyes were streaming with silent tears. His tears were not unnoticed, and while some of the Jews observed with respectful sympathy this proof of His affection for the dead, others were asking dubiously, perhaps almost sneeringly, whether He who had opened the eyes of the blind could not have saved His friend from death. They had not heard how, in the far-off village of Galilee, He had raised the dead; but they knew that in Jerusalem He had opened the eyes of one born blind, and that seemed to them a miracle no less stupendous. But Jesus knew and heard their comments, and once more the whole scene—its genuine sorrows, its hired mourners, its uncalmed hatreds, all concentrated around the ghastly work of death—came so powerfully over His spirit that, though He knew that He was going to wake the dead, once more His whole being was swept by a storm of emotion. The grave, like most of the graves belonging to the wealthier Jews, was a recess carved horizontally in the rock, with a slab or mass of stone to close the entrance. Jesus bade them remove this *golal*, as it was called. Then Martha interposed—partly from conviction that the soul had now utterly departed from the vicinity of the mouldering body, partly afraid in her natural delicacy of the shocking spectacle which the removal of that stone would reveal. For in that hot climate it is necessary that burial should follow immediately upon death, and as it was the evening of the fourth day since Lazarus had died, there was too much reason to fear that by this time decomposition had set in. Solemnly Jesus reminded her of His promise, and the stone was moved from the place where the dead was laid. He stood at the entrance, and all others shrank a little backward, with their eyes still fixed on that dark and silent cave. A hush fell upon them all as Jesus raised His eyes and thanked God for the coming con-

firmation of His prayer. And then, raising to its clearest tones that voice of awful and sonorous authority, and uttering, as was usual with Him on such occasions, the briefest words, He cried, "Lazarus, come forth!" Those words thrilled once more through that region of impenetrable darkness which separates us from the world to come; and scarcely were they spoken when, like a specter, from the rocky tomb issued a figure, swathed indeed in its white and ghastly ceremonies—with the napkin round the head which had upheld the jaw that four days previously had dropped in death, bound hand and foot and face, but not livid, not horrible—the figure of a youth with the healthy blood of a restored life flowing through his veins; of a life restored—so tradition tells us—for thirty more long years of life, and light, and love.

There were many witnesses of this miracle who believed when they saw it, but there were others who could only carry an angry and alarmed account of it to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.

The Sanhedrin met in a spirit of hatred and perplexity. They could not deny the miracle; they would not believe on Him who had performed it; they could only dread His growing influence, and conjecture that it would be used to make Himself a king, and so end in Roman intervention and the annihilation of their political existence. And as they vainly raged in impotent counsels, Joseph Caiaphas arose to address them. With shameless avowal of a policy most flagitiously selfish and unjust, he haughtily told the Sanhedrin that all their proposals were mere ignorance, and that the only thing to be done was to sacrifice one victim—innocent or guilty he did not stop to inquire or to define—one victim for the whole people—aye, and John adds, not for that nation only, but for all God's children scattered throughout the world—they accepted unhesitatingly that voice of unconscious prophecy. And, by accepting it they filled to the brim the cup of their iniquity, and incurred

the crime which drew upon their guilty heads the very catastrophe which it was committed to avert. It was this Moloch worship of worse than human sacrifice which, as in the days of Manasseh, doomed them to a second and a more terrible, and a more enduring, destruction. There were some, indeed, who were not to be found on that Hill of Evil Counsel, or who, if present, consented not to the counsel or will of them; but from that day forth the secret fiat had been issued that Jesus must be put to death. Henceforth He was living with a price upon His head.

And that fiat, however originally secret, became instantly known. Jesus was not ignorant of it; and for the last few weeks of His earthly existence, till the due time had brought round the Passover at which He meant to lay down His life, He retired in secret to a little obscure city, near the wilderness, called Ephraim. There, safe from all the tumults and machinations of His deadly enemies, He spent calmly and happily those last few weeks of rest, surrounded only by His disciples, and training them, in that peaceful seclusion, for the mighty work of thrusting their sickles into the ripening harvest of the world. None, or few beside that faithful band, knew of His hiding place; for the Pharisees, when they found themselves unable to conceal their designs, had published an order that if any man knew where He was he was to reveal it, that they might seize Him, if necessary even by violence, and execute the decision at which they arrived. But, as yet, the bribe had no effect.

## Chapter 24

### PALM SUNDAY

THERE seems to have been a general impression for some time beforehand that, in spite of all which had recently happened, Jesus would still be present at the Paschal Feast. The probability of this had incessantly been debated among the people, and the expected arrival of the Prophet of Galilee was looked forward to with intense curiosity and interest.

Consequently, when it became known early on Sunday morning that during the day He would certainly enter the Holy City, the excitement was very great. The news would be spread by some of the numerous Jews who had visited Bethany on the previous evening, after the sunset had closed the Sabbath, and thus enabled them to exceed the limits of the Sabbath Day's journey. Thus it was that a very great multitude was prepared to receive and welcome the Deliverer who had raised the dead.

Passing from under the palm trees of Bethany, Jesus and His disciples approached the fig gardens of Bethphage, the "House of Figs," a small suburb or hamlet of undiscovered site, which lay probably a little to the south of Bethany, and in sight of it. To this village, or some other hamlet which lay near it, Jesus dispatched two of His disciples. The minute description of the spot given by Mark makes us suppose that Peter was one of them, and if so he was probably accompanied by John. Jesus told them that when they got to the village they should find an ass tied, and a colt

with her; these they were to loose and bring to Him, and if any objection arose on the part of the owner, it would at once be silenced by telling him that "the Lord had need of them." Everything happened as He had said. In the passage round the house they found the ass and the foal, which was adapted for its sacred purpose because it had never yet been used. The owners, on hearing their object, at once permitted them to take the animals, and they led them to Jesus, putting their garments over them to do Him regal honor. Then they lifted Him upon the colt, and the triumphal procession set forth. He rides not upon a war horse but on an animal which was the symbol of peace. The haughty Gentiles, had they witnessed the humble procession, would have utterly derided it, as indeed they did deride the record of it; but the apostles recalled in after-days that it fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is meek, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Yes, it was a procession of very lowly pomp, and yet beside it how do the grandest triumphs of aggressive war and unjust conquest sink into utter insignificance and disgrace!

Jesus mounted the unused foal, while probably some of His disciples led it by the bridle. And no sooner had He started than the multitude spread out their upper garments to tapestry His path, and kept tearing or cutting down the boughs of olive, and fig, and walnut, to scatter them before Him. Then, in a burst of enthusiasm, the disciples broke into the shout, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" and the multitude caught up the joyous strain, and told each other how He had raised Lazarus from the dead.

The road slopes by a gradual ascent up the Mount of Olives, through green fields and under shady trees, till it

suddenly sweeps round to the northward. It is at this angle of the road that Jerusalem, which hitherto has been hidden by the shoulder of the hill, bursts full upon the view. There, through the clear atmosphere, rising out of the deep umbrageous valleys which surrounded it, the city of ten thousand memories stood clear before Him. Who can interpret, who can enter into the mighty rush of divine compassion which, at that spectacle, shook the Saviour's soul? As He gazed on that "mass of gold and snow," was there no pride, no exultation in the heart of its true King? Far from it! He had dropped silent tears at the grave of Lazarus; here He wept aloud. All the shame of His mockery, all the anguish of His torture, was powerless, five days afterwards, to extort from Him a single groan, or to wet His eyelids with one trickling tear; but here, all the pity that was within Him overmastered His human spirit, and He not only wept but broke into a passion of lamentation, in which the choked voice seemed to struggle for its utterance. A strange Messianic triumph! A strange interruption of the festal cries! The Deliverer weeps over the city which it is now too late to save; the King prophesies the utter ruin of the nation which He came to rule! "If thou hadst known," He cried—while the wondering multitudes looked on, and knew not what to think or say—"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace!" and there sorrow interrupted the sentence, and when He found His voice to continue He could only add, "But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." It was the last invitation from "the Glory of God on the Mount of Olives," before that Shechinah vanished from their eyes forever.

Sternly, literally, terribly, within fifty years, was that prophecy fulfilled. Four years before the war began, while as yet the city was in the greatest peace and prosperity, a melancholy maniac traversed its streets with the repeated cry, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people"; nor could any scourgings or tortures wring from him any other words except "Woe! woe! to Jerusalem; woe to the city; woe to the people; woe to the holy house!" until seven years afterwards, during the siege, he was killed by a stone from a catapult. His voice was but the renewed echo of the voice of prophecy.

There had been a pause in the procession while Jesus shed His bitter tears and uttered His prophetic lamentation. But now the people in the valley of Kedron, and about the walls of Jerusalem, and the pilgrims whose booths and tents stood so thickly on the green slopes below, had caught sight of the approaching company, and heard the echo of the glad shouts, and knew what the commotion meant. At that time the palms were numerous in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, though now but a few remain; and tearing down their green and graceful branches, the people streamed up the road to meet the approaching Prophet. And when the two streams of people met—those who had accompanied Him from Bethany and those who had come to meet Him from Jerusalem—they left Him riding in the midst, and some preceding, some following Him, advanced, shouting "Hosannas" and waving branches, to the gate of Jerusalem.

Mingled among the crowd were some of the Pharisees, and the joy of the multitude was to them gall and wormwood. What meant these Messianic cries and kingly titles? Were they not dangerous and unseemly? Why did He allow them? "Master, rebuke Thy disciples." But He would not do so. "If these should hold their peace," He said, "the very stones

would immediately cry out." The words may have recalled to them the threats which occur, amid denunciations against covetousness and cruelty, and the utter destruction by which they should be avenged, in the Prophet Habakkuk—"For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it." The Pharisees felt that they were powerless to stay the flood of enthusiasm.

And when they reached the walls the whole city was stirred with powerful excitement and alarm. "Who is this?" they asked, as they leaned out of the lattices and from the roofs, and stood aside in the bazaars and streets to let them pass; and the multitude answered, with something of pride in their great countryman—but already, as it were, with a shadow of distrust falling over their high Messianic hopes, as they came in contact with the contempt and hostility of the capital—"This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth."

The Lord whom they sought had come suddenly to His Temple—even the messenger of the covenant; but they neither recognized Him nor delighted in Him, though His first act was to purify and purge it that they might offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. As He looked round on all things His heart was again moved within Him to strong indignation. Three years before, at His first Passover, He had cleansed the Temple; but, alas, in vain. Already greed had won the battle against reverence; already the tessellated floors and pillared colonnades of the Court of the Gentiles had been again usurped by droves of oxen and sheep, and dovesellers, and usurers, and its whole precincts were dirty with driven cattle, and echoed to the hum of bargaining voices and the clink of gold. In that desecrated place He would not teach. Once more, in mingled sorrow and anger, He drove them forth, while none dared to resist His burning zeal; nor would He even suffer the peaceful enclosure to be disturbed by people passing to and fro with vessels, and so turning it into a thoroughfare. The dense crowd of Jews—numbering, it is said, three millions—who



crowded to the Holy City in the week of the feast no doubt made the Court of the Gentiles a worse and busier scene on that day than at any other time, and the more so because on that day, according to the law, the Paschal lamb—which the visitors would be obliged to purchase—was chosen and set apart. But no consideration of their business and convenience could make it tolerable that they should turn His Father's house, which was a house of prayer for all nations, into a place most like one of those foul caves which He had seen so often in the Wady Hammam, where brigands wrangled over their ill-gotten spoils.

Not till He had reduced the Temple to decency and silence could He begin His customary ministrations. Doubtless the task was easier, because it had already been once performed. But when the miserable hubbub was over, then the Temple resumed what should have been its normal aspect. Sufferers came to Him, and He healed them. Listeners in hundreds thronged round Him, were astonished at His doctrine, hung upon His lips.

A certain sadness and sense of rejection fell even on the evening of the Day of Triumph. It was not safe for Jesus to stay in the city, nor was it in accordance with His wishes. He returned secretly from the Temple, hid Himself from His watchful enemies, and protected as yet outside the city walls by the enthusiasm of His Galilean followers, "went out unto Bethany with the Twelve."

## Chapter 25

### MONDAY IN PASSION WEEK — A DAY OF PARABLES

RISING from His bivouac in the neighborhood of Bethany while it was still early, Jesus returned at once to the city and the Temple; and on His way He felt hungry. It may be that in His compassionate eagerness to teach His people He had neglected the common wants of life; it may be that there were no means of procuring food in the fields where He had spent the night; it may be again that the hour of prayer and morning sacrifice had not yet come, before which the Jews did not usually take a meal. But whatever may have been the cause, Jesus hungered, so as to be driven to look for wayside fruit to sustain and refresh Him for the day's work. A few dates or figs, a piece of black bread, a draught of water, are sufficient at any time for an Oriental's simple meal.

There are trees in abundance even now throughout this region, but not the numerous palms, and figs, and walnut trees which made the vicinity of Jerusalem like one umbrageous park, before they were cut down by Titus, in the operations of the siege. Fig trees especially were planted by the roadside, because the dust was thought to facilitate their growth, and their refreshing fruit was common property. At a distance in front of Him Jesus caught sight of a solitary fig tree, and although the ordinary season at which figs ripened had not yet arrived, yet, as it was clad with verdure, and as the fruit of a fig sets before the leaves unfold, this

tree looked more than usually promising. Its rich large leaves seemed to show that it was fruitful, and their usually early growth that it was not only fruitful but precociously vigorous. On the plains of Gennesareth Jesus must have been accustomed to see the figs hanging ripe on the trees every month in the year excepting January and February; and there is to this day, in Palestine, a kind of white or early fig which ripens in spring, and much before the ordinary or black fig. Jesus might well have expected to find a few figs to satisfy the craving of hunger on this fair-promising leafy tree, although the ordinary fig season had not yet arrived.

But when He came up to it, He was disappointed. The sap was circulating; the leaves made a fair show; but of fruit there was none. Fit emblem of a hypocrite, whose external semblance is a delusion and sham—fit emblem of the nation in whom the ostentatious profession of religion brought forth no “fruit of good living”—the tree was barren.

And therefore, since it was but deceptive and useless, a barren cumberer of the ground, He made it the eternal warning against a life of hypocrisy continued until it is too late, and, in the hearing of His disciples, uttered upon it the solemn fiat, “Never fruit grow upon thee more!” Even at the word, such infructuous life as it possessed was arrested, and it began to wither away.

They went on their way, and, as usual, entered the Temple; and scarcely had they entered it, when they were met by another indication of the intense incessant spirit of opposition which actuated the rulers of Jerusalem. A formidable deputation approached them, imposing alike in its numbers and its stateliness. The chief priests—heads of the twenty-four—the learned scribes, the leading rabbis, representatives of all the constituent classes of the Sanhedrin were there, to overawe Him—whom they despised as the poor ignorant Prophet of despicable Nazareth—with all that was venerable in age, eminent in wisdom, or imposing in authority in the great

Council of the nation. The people whom He was engaged in teaching made reverent way for them, lest they should pollute those floating robes and ample fringes with a touch; and when they had arranged themselves around Jesus, they sternly and abruptly asked Him, "By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?" They demanded of Him His warrant for thus publicly assuming the functions of rabbi and prophet, for riding into Jerusalem amid the hosannas of attendant crowds, for purging the Temple of the traffickers, at whose presence they connived.

The answer surprised and confounded them. With that infinite presence of mind, of which the world's history furnishes no parallel, and which remained calm under the worst assaults, Jesus told them that the answer to their question depended on the answer which they were prepared to give to His question: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" A sudden pause followed. "Answer me," said Jesus, interrupting their whispered colloquy. And surely they, who had sent a commission to inquire publicly into the claims of John, were in a position to answer. But no answer came. They knew well the import of the question. They could not for a moment put it aside as irrelevant. John had openly and emphatically testified to Jesus, had acknowledged Him, before their own deputies, not only as a Prophet, but as a Prophet far greater than himself—nay, more, as the Prophet, the Messiah. Would they recognize that authority, or would they not? Clearly Jesus had a right to demand their reply to that question before He could reply to theirs. But they could not, or rather they would not, answer that question. It reduced them, in fact, to a complete dilemma. They would not say "from heaven," because they had in heart rejected it; they dared not say "of men," because the belief in John was so vehement and so unanimous that openly to reject him would have been to endanger their personal safety. They were reduced, therefore

—they, the masters of Israel—to the ignominious necessity of saying, “We cannot tell.”

Jesus did not press upon their discomfiture, though He well knew—as the form of His answer showed—that their “do not know” was a “do not choose to say.” Since, however, their failure to answer clearly absolved Him from any necessity to tell them further of an authority about which, by their own confession, they were totally incompetent to decide, He ended the scene by simply saying, “Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.”

So they retired a little into the background. He continued the instruction of the people which they had interrupted, and began once more to speak to them in parables, which both the multitude and the members of the Sanhedrin who were present could hardly fail to understand. And He expressly called their attention to what He was about to say. “What think ye?” He asked, for now it is their turn to submit to be questioned; and then, telling them of the two sons, of whom the one flatly refused his father’s bidding, but afterwards repented and did it, the other blandly promised an obedience which he never performed, He asked, “Which of these two did his father’s will?” They could but answer, “The first”; and He then pointed out to them the plain and solemn meaning of their own answer. It was that the very publicans and harlots, despite the apparent open shamelessness of their disobedience, were yet showing them—them, the scrupulous and highly reputed legalists of the holy nation—the way into the kingdom of heaven. Yes, these sinners, whom they despised and hated, were streaming before them through the door which was not yet shut. For John had come to these Jews on their own principles and in their own practices, and they had pretended to receive him, but had not; but the publicans and harlots had repented at his bidding. For all their broad fringes and conspicuous phylacteries, they—the priests, the separatists, the rabbis of these people—were

worse in the sight of God than sinners whom they would have scorned to touch with one of their fingers.

Another warning utterance He spoke on this Day of Parables—the parable of the marriage of the king's son. In its basis and framework it closely resembled the parable of the great supper uttered, during His last journey, at a Pharisee's house; but in many of its details, and in its entire conclusion, it was different. Here the ungrateful subjects who receive the invitation not only make light of it, and pursue undisturbed their worldly avocations, but some of them actually insult and murder the messenger who had invited them, and—a point at which the history merges into prophecy—are destroyed and their city burned. And the rest of the story points to yet further scenes, pregnant with still deeper meanings. Others are invited; the wedding feast is furnished with guests both bad and good; the king comes in, and notices one who had thrust himself into the company in his own rags, without providing or accepting the wedding garment, which the commonest courtesy required.

## Chapter 26

### THE DAY OF TEMPTATIONS — THE LAST AND GREATEST DAY OF THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS

ON the following morning Jesus rose with His disciples to enter for the last time the Temple courts. On their way they passed the solitary fig tree, no longer gay with its false leafy garniture, but shriveled, from the root upwards, in every bough. The quick eye of Peter was the first to notice it, and he exclaimed, "Master, behold the fig tree which Thou cursedst is withered away." The disciples stopped to look at it, and to express their astonishment at the rapidity with which the denunciation had been fulfilled. What struck them most was the power of Jesus; the deeper meanings of His symbolic act they seem for the time to have missed; and leaving these lessons to dawn upon them gradually, Jesus addressed the mood of their minds at the moment, and told them that if they would but have faith in God—faith which should enable them to offer up their prayers with perfect and unwavering confidence—they should not only be able to perform such a wonder as that done to the fig tree but even "if they bade this mountain"—and as He spoke He may have pointed either to Olivet or to Moriah—"to be removed, and cast into the sea, it should obey them." But, since in this one instance the power had been put forth to destroy, He added a very important warning. They were not to suppose that this emblematic act gave them any license to wield the sacred powers which faith and prayer

would bestow on them, for purposes of anger or vengeance; nay, no power was possible to the heart that knew not how to forgive, and the unforgiving heart could never be forgiven. The sword, and the famine, and the pestilence were to be no instruments for them to wield, nor were they even to dream of evoking against their enemies the fire of heaven or the "icy wind of death." The secret of successful prayer was faith; the road to faith in God lay through pardon of transgression; pardon was possible to them alone who were ready to pardon others.

He was scarcely seated in the Temple when the result of the machinations of His enemies on the previous evening showed itself in a new kind of strategy, involving one of the most perilous and deeply laid of all schemes to entrap and ruin Him. The deadly nature of the plot appeared in the fact that, to carry it out, the Pharisees were united in ill-omened conjunction with the Herodians; so that two parties, usually ranked against each other in strong opposition, were now reconciled in a conspiracy for the ruin of their common enemy.

The Herodians might come before Jesus without raising a suspicion of sinister motives; but the Pharisees, astutely anxious to put Him off His guard, did not come to Him in person. They sent some of their younger scholars, who (already adept in hypocrisy) were to approach Him as though in all the guileless simplicity of an inquiring spirit. They evidently designed to raise the impression that a dispute had occurred between them and the Herodians, and that they desired to settle it by referring the decision of the question at issue to the final and higher authority of the Great Prophet. They came to Him circumspectly, deferentially, courteously. "Rabbi," they said to Him with flattering earnestness, "we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man; for Thou regardest not the person of men." It was as though they would entreat Him, without fear or favor, confidentially



to give them His private opinion; and as though they really wanted His opinion for their own guidance in a moral question of practical importance, and were quite sure that He alone could resolve their distressing uncertainty. But why all this sly undulatory approach and serpentine ensalivation? The forked tongue and the envenomed fang appeared in a moment. "Tell us, therefore [since You are so wise, so true, so courageous]—tell us, therefore, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" This capitation tax, which we all so much detest, but the legality of which these Herodians support, ought we, or ought we not, to pay it? Which of us is in the right—we who loathe and resent, or the Herodians who delight in it?

He *must*, they thought, answer "Yes" or "No"; there is no possible escape from a plain question so cautiously, sincerely, and respectfully put. Perhaps He will answer, "Yes, it is lawful." If so, all apprehension of Him on the part of the Herodians will be removed, for then He will not be likely to endanger them or their views. For although there is something which looks dangerous in this common enthusiasm for Him, yet if one, whom they take to be the Messiah should openly adhere to a heathen tyranny, and sanction its most galling imposition, such a decision will at once explode and evaporate any regard which the people may feel for Him. If, on the other hand, as is all but certain, He should adopt the views of His countryman Judas the Gaulonite, and answer, "No, it is not lawful," then, in that case, too, we are equally rid of Him; for then He is in open rebellion against the Roman power, and these new Herodian friends of ours can at once hand Him over to the jurisdiction of the Procurator. Pontius Pilatus will deal very roughly with His pretensions, and will, if need be, without the slightest hesitation, mingle His blood, as he has done the blood of other Galileans, with the blood of the sacrifices.

They must have awaited the answer with breathless in-

terest; but even if they succeeded in concealing the hate which gleamed in their eyes, Jesus at once saw the sting and heard the hiss of the Pharisaic serpent. They had fawned on Him with their "Rabbi," and "true," and "impartial," and "fearless"; He "blights them with the flash" of one indignant word: "Hypocrites!" That word must have undeceived their hopes, and crumbled their craftiness into dust. "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Bring me the tribute money." They would not be likely to carry with them the hated Roman coinage with its heathen symbols, though they might have been at once able to produce from their girdles the Temple shekel. But they would only have to step outside the Court of the Gentiles, and borrow from the money-changers' tables a current Roman coin. While the people stood round in wondering silence they brought Him a denarius, and put it in His hand. On one side were stamped the haughty, beautiful features of the Emperor Tiberius, with all the wicked scorn upon the lip; on the obverse his title of *Pontifex Maximus*! "Whose image and superscription is this?" He asked. They say unto Him, "Caesar's." There, then, was the simplest possible solution of their cunning question. "Render, therefore, unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." That alone might have been enough, for it implied that their national acceptance of this coinage answered their question, and revealed its emptiness. The very word which He used conveyed the lesson. Then had asked, "Is it lawful to give?" He corrects them, and says, "Render"—"Give back." It was not a voluntary gift, but a legal due; not a cheerful offering, but a political necessity. It was perfectly understood among the Jews, and was laid down in the distinctest language by their greatest rabbis in later days, that to accept the coinage of any king was to acknowledge his supremacy. By accepting the denarius, therefore, as a current coin they were openly declaring that Caesar was their sovereign, and they—the very best of them—had settled the question that it *was* lawful to pay the poll tax, by habitually

doing so. It was their duty, then, to obey the power which they had deliberately chosen, and the tax, under these circumstances, only represented an equivalent for the advantages which they received. But Jesus could not leave them with this lesson only. He added the far deeper and weightier words—"and to God the things that are God's." To Caesar you owe the coin which you have admitted as the symbol of his authority, and which bears his image and superscription; to God you owe yourselves. Nothing can more fully reveal the depth of hypocrisy in these Pharisaic questioners than the fact that, in spite of the divine answer, and in spite of their own secret and cherished convictions, they yet made it a ground of clamorous accusation against Jesus that He had "*forbidden to give tribute unto Caesar.*"

## Chapter 27

### THE GREAT DENUNCIATION

ONCE more the insatiable spirit of casuistry and dissension awoke, and this time a scribe, a student of the Torah, thought that he, too, would try to fathom the extent of Christ's learning and wisdom. He asked a question which instantly betrayed a false and unspiritual point of view: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"

The rabbinical schools, in their meddling, carnal, superficial spirit of word-weaving and letter-worship, had spun large accumulations of worthless subtlety all over the Mosaic law. Among other things they had wasted their idleness in fantastic attempts to count, and classify, and weigh, and measure all the separate commandments of the ceremonial and moral law.

Some thought the omission of ablutions as bad as homicide; some that the precepts of the Mishna were all "heavy"; those of the law were some heavy and some light. Others considered the third to be the greatest commandment. None of them had realized the great principle that the willful violation of one commandment is the transgression of all (James 2:10), because the object of the entire law is the spirit of obedience to God.

Still the best and most enlightened of the rabbis had already rightly seen that the greatest of all commands, because it was the source of all the others, was that which enjoined the love of the one true God. Jesus had already had

occasion to express His approval of this judgment, and He now repeats it. Pointing to the scribes' *tephillin*, in which one of the four divisions contained the *Shema*—recited twice a day by every pious Israelite—He told them that *that* was the greatest of all commandments, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord"; and that the second was like to it: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Love to God issuing in love to man—love to man, our brother, resulting from love to our Father, God—on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The question, in the sense in which the scribe had put it, was one of those "strivings about the law, which, as they were handled by the schools, were unprofitable and vain." But he could not fail to see that Jesus had not treated it in the idle disputatious spirit of jangling logomachy to which he was accustomed, and had not in His answer sanctioned any of the common error and heresies of exalting the ceremonial above the moral, or the tradition over the Torah, or the decisions of Sopherim above the utterances of prophets. Still less had He fallen into the fatal error of the rabbis, by making obedience in one particular atone for transgression in another. The commandments which He had mentioned as the greatest were not special but general—not selected out of many, but inclusive of all. The scribe had the sense to observe, and the candor to acknowledge, that the answer of Jesus was wise and noble. "Well, Master," he exclaimed, "Thou hast said the truth"; and then he showed that he had read the Scriptures to some advantage by summarizing some of those grand free utterances of the Prophets which prove that love to God and love to man is better than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. Jesus approved of his sincerity, and said to him in words which involved both gracious encouragement and serious warning, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven." It was, therefore, at once easier for him to enter, and more perilous to turn aside. When he had entered he would see that the very spirit of his ques-

tion was an erroneous and faulty one, and that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all."

No other attempt was ever made to catch or entangle Jesus by the words of His lips. The Sanhedrin had now experienced, by the defeat of their cunning stratagems, and the humiliation of their vaunted wisdom, that one ray of light from the sunlit hills on which His spirit sat was enough to dissipate, and to pierce through and through, the fogs of wordy contention and empty repetition in which they lived and moved and had their being. But it was well for them to be convinced how easily, had He desired it, He could have employed against them with overwhelming force the very engines which, with results so futile and so disastrous, they had put in play against Him. He therefore put to them one simple question, based on their own principles of interpretation, and drawn from a Psalm (the 110th), which they regarded as distinctly Messianic. In that Psalm occurs the expression "The Lord [*Jehovah*] said unto my Lord [*Adonai*], Sit Thou on My right hand." How, then, could the Messiah be David's son? Could Abraham have called Isaac and Jacob and Joseph, or any of his own descendants near or remote, his *lord*? If not, how came David to do so? There could be but one answer—because that Son would be divine, not human—David's son by human birth, but David's Lord by divine subsistence. But they could not find this simple explanation, nor, indeed, any other; they could not find it because Jesus was their Messiah, and they had rejected Him. They chose to ignore the fact that He was, in the flesh, the son of David; and when, as their Messiah, He had called Himself the Son of God, they had raised their hands in pious horror, and had taken up stones to stone Him. So here again—since they had rejected the clue of faith which would have led them to the true explanation—their wisdom was utterly at fault, and though they claimed so haughtily to be leaders of the people, yet, even on a topic so ordinary

and so important as their Messianic hopes, they were convicted, for the second time on a single day, of being "blind leaders of the blind."

And they loved their blindness; they would not acknowledge their ignorance; they did not repent them of their faults; the bitter venom of their hatred to Him was not driven forth by His forbearance; the dense midnight of their perversity was not dispelled by His wisdom. Their purpose to destroy Him was fixed, obstinate, irreversible; and if one plot failed, they were but driven with more stubborn sullenness into another. There could now be no hope of their becoming reconciled to Him; they were but being stereotyped in unrepentant malice against Him. Turning, therefore, to His disciples, but in the audience of all the people, He rolled over their guilty heads, with crash on crash of moral anger, the thunder of His utter condemnation. So far as they represented a legitimate external authority He bade His hearers to respect them, but He warned them *not* to imitate their falsity, their oppression, their ostentation, their love of prominence, their fondness for titles, their insinuating avarice, their self-exalting pride. He bade them beware of the broadened phylacteries and exaggerated tassels—of the long robes that covered the murderous hearts, and the long prayers that diverted attention from the covetous designs. And then, solemnly and terribly, He uttered His eightfold "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," scathing them in utterance after utterance with a flame which at once revealed and scorched. Woe unto them for the ignorant erudition which closed the gates of heaven, and the injurious jealousy which would suffer no others to enter in! Woe unto them for their oppressive hypocrisy and greedy cant! Woe for the proselytizing fanaticism which did but produce a more perilous corruption! Woe for the blind hairsplitting folly which so confused the sanctity of oaths as to tempt their followers into gross profanity! Woe for the petty paltry sham-scrupulosity which paid tithes of potherbs, and thought

nothing of justice, mercy, and faith — which strained out animalcula from the goblet, and swallowed camels into the heart! Woe for the external cleanliness of cup and platter contrasted with the gluttony and drunkenness to which they ministered! Woe to the tombs that simulated the sanctity of temples—to the glistening outward plaster of hypocrisy which did but render more ghastly by contrast the reeking pollutions of the sepulcher within! Woe for the mock repentance which condemned their fathers for the murder of the prophets, and yet reflected the murderous spirit of those fathers—nay, filled up and exceeded the measure of their guilt by yet a deadlier and more dreadful sacrifice! Aye, on that generation would come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias, whom they slew between the porch and the altar. The purple cloud of retribution had long been gathering its elements of fury: upon their heads should it burst in flame!

And at that point the voice which had rung with just and noble indignation broke with the tenderest pity—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate! For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."



## Chapter 28

### FAREWELL TO THE TEMPLE

It must have been clear to all that the Great Denunciation recorded in the last chapter involved a final and hopeless rupture. After language such as this there could be no possibility of reconciliation. It was "too late." The door was shut. When Jesus left the Temple His disciples must have been aware that He was leaving it forever.

But apparently as He was leaving it another and less painful incident happened, which enabled Him to leave the actual precincts of the house of His Father with words not of anger but of approval. In the Court of the Women were thirteen chests called *shopheroth*, each shaped like a trumpet, broadening downwards from the aperture, and each adorned with various inscriptions. Into these were cast those religious and benevolent contributions which helped to furnish the Temple with its splendid wealth. While Jesus was sitting there the multitude were dropping their gifts, and the wealthier donors were conspicuous among them as they ostentatiously offered their gold and silver. Raising His eyes, perhaps from a reverie of sorrow, Jesus at a glance took in the whole significance of the scene. At that moment a poor widow timidly dropped in her little contribution. The lips of the rich contributors may have curled with scorn at a presentation which was the very lowest legal minimum. She had given two *prutahs*, the very smallest of current coins; for it was not lawful, even for the poorest, to offer only one.

A *lepton*, or *prutah*, was the eighth part of an *as*, and was worth a little less than half a farthing, so that her whole gift was of the value of less than a farthing; and with the shame of poverty she may well have shrunk from giving so trivial a gift when the rich men around her were lavishing their gold. But Jesus was pleased with the faithfulness and the self-sacrificing spirit of the gift. It was like the "cup of cold water" given for love's sake, which in His kingdom should not go unrewarded. He wished to teach forever the great lesson that the essence of charity is self-denial; and the self-denial of this widow in her pauper condition was far greater than that of the wealthiest Pharisee who had contributed his gold. "For they all flung in of their abundance, but she of her penury cast in all she had, her whole means of subsistence."

And now Jesus left the Temple for the last time; but the feelings of the apostles still clung with the loving pride of their nationality to that sacred and memorable spot. They stopped to cast upon it one last lingering gaze, and one of them was eager to call His attention to its goodly stones and splendid offerings. But the heart of Jesus was sad. To Him the sole beauty of a temple was the sincerity of its worshippers, and no gold or marble, no brilliant vermilion or curiously-carven cedar-wood, no delicate sculpturing or votive gems, could change for Him a den of robbers into a House of Prayer. The builders were still busily at work, as they had been for nearly fifty years, but their work, unblest of God, was destined—like the earthquake-shaken forum of guilty Pompeii—to be destroyed before it was finished. Briefly and almost sternly Jesus answered, as He turned away from the glittering spectacle, "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down."

Sadly and silently, with such thoughts in their hearts, the little band turned their backs on the sacred building, which stood there as an epitome of Jewish history from the days

of Solomon onwards. They crossed the valley of Kidron, and climbed the steep footpath that leads over the Mount of Olives to Bethany. At the summit of the hill they paused, and Jesus sat down to rest—perhaps under the green boughs of those two stately cedar trees which then adorned the summit of the hill. It was a scene well adapted to inspire most solemn thoughts. Deep on the one side beneath Him lay the Holy City, which had long become a harlot, and which now, on this day—the last great day of His public ministry—had shown finally that she knew not the time of her visitation.

It may be that the shadows of His thought gave a strange solemnity to His attitude and features as He sat there silent among the silent and saddened band of His few faithful followers. Not without a touch of awe His nearest and most favored apostles—Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew—came near to Him, and as they saw His eye fixed upon the Temple, asked Him privately, “When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Their “When?” remained for the present unanswered. It was the way of Jesus, when some ignorant or irrelevant or inadmissible question was put to Him, to rebuke it not directly but by passing it over, and by substituting for its answer some great moral lesson which was connected with it, and could alone make it valuable. Accordingly, this question of the apostles drew from Him the great Eschatological Discourse, or Discourse of the Last Things, of which the four moral keynotes are “Beware!” and “Watch!” and “Endure!” and “Pray!”

In this discourse Jesus first warned them of false messiahs and false prophets; He told them that the wild struggling of nations and those physical commotions and calamities which have so often seemed to synchronize with the great crises of history were not to trouble them, as they would be but the throe of the Palingenesia, the first birthpang of the coming time. He prophesied of dreadful persecutions, of abounding iniquity, of decaying faith, of wide evangelization

as the signs of a coming end. And as we learn from many other passages of Scripture, these signs, as they did usher in the destruction of Jerusalem, so shall reappear on a larger scale before the end of all things is at hand.

The next great paragraph of this speech dwelt mainly on the *immediate* future. He had foretold distinctly the destruction of the Holy City, and He now gives them indications which should forewarn them of its approach, and lead them to secure their safety. When they should see Jerusalem encompassed with armies—when the abomination which should cause desolation should stand in the Holy Place—then even from the fields, even from the housetops, they were to fly out of Judea to the shelter of the Trans-Jordanic hills, from the unspeakable horrors that should follow. Nor even then were they to be carried away by any deceivableness of unrighteousness, caused by the yearning intensity of Messianic hopes. Many should cry, "Lo here! and lo there!" but let them pay no heed; for when He came, His presence, like lightning shining from the east even to the west, should be visible and unmistakable to all the world, and like eagles gathering to the carcass should the destined ministers of His vengeance wing their flight. By such warnings the Christians were preserved.

Then Jesus passed to the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars, and the shaking of the powers of heaven—signs which may have a meaning both literal and metaphorical—which should precede the appearing of the Son of Man in heaven, and the gathering of the elect from the four winds by the trumpet-blast of the angels. That day of the Lord should have its signs no less than the other, and He bade His disciples in all ages to mark those signs and interpret them aright, even as they interpreted the signs of the coming summer in the fig tree's budding leaves. But that day should come to the world suddenly, unexpectedly, overwhelmingly; and as it should be a day of reward to all faithful servants, so should it be a day of vengeance and

destruction to the glutton and the drunkard, to the hypocrite and the oppressor. Therefore, to impress yet more indelibly upon their minds the lessons of watchfulness and faithfulness, and to warn them yet more emphatically against the peril of the drowsy life and the smoldering lamp, He told them the exquisite parables—so beautiful, so simple, yet so rich in instruction—of the ten virgins and of the talents, and drew for them a picture of that Great Day of Judgment on which the King should separate all nations from one another as the shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. On that day those who had shown the least kindness to the least of these His brethren should be accounted to have done it unto Him. But then, lest these grand eschatological utterances should lead them to any of their old mistaken Messianic notions, He ended them with the sad and now half-familiar refrain that His death and anguish must precede all else. The occasion, the manner, the very day are now revealed to them with the utmost plainness and simplicity: "Ye know that after two days is the passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified."

So ended that great discourse upon the Mount of Olives, and the sun set, and He arose and walked with His apostles the short remaining road to Bethany. It was the last time that He would ever walk it upon earth; and after the trials, the weariness, the awful teachings, the terrible agitations of that eventful day, how delicious to Him must have been that hour of twilight loveliness and evening calm; how refreshing the peace and affection which surrounded Him in the quiet village and the tranquil home.

And surely that last evening walk to Bethany on that Tuesday evening in Passion Week must have breathed deep calm into His soul. The thought, indeed, of the bitter cup which He was so soon to drink was doubtless present to Him, but present only in its aspect of exalted sacrifice, and the highest purpose of love fulfilled. Not the pangs which He would suffer, but the pangs from which He would save;

not the power of darkness which would seem to win a short-lived triumph, but the redeeming victory—the full, perfect, and sufficient atonement—these we may well, though reverently, believe to have been the subjects which dominated in His thoughts.

## Chapter 29

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END

It was inevitable that the burning words of indignation which Jesus had uttered on this last great day of His ministry should exasperate beyond all control the hatred and fury of the priestly party among the Jews. Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, priests, scribes, elders, Annas the astitute and tyrannous, Caiaphas the abject and servile, were all now aroused; and, dreading they knew not what outburst of religious anarchy, which would shake the very foundations of their system, they met together probably on that very evening in the Palace of Caiaphas, sinking all their own differences in a common inspiration of hatred against that long-promised Messiah in whom they only recognized a common enemy.

This meeting was held, in all probability, on the evening of Tuesday, while the passions which the events of that day had kindled were still raging with volcanic energy. So that, at the very moment while they were deciding that during that Eastertide our Passover should *not* be slain—at that very moment, seated on the slopes of Olivet, Jesus was foretelling to His disciples, with the calmest certainty, that He *should* be sacrificed on the very day on which, at evening, the lamb was sacrificed, and the Paschal feast began.

Accordingly, before the meeting was over, an event occurred which at once altered the conclusions of the council, and rendered possible the immediate capture of Jesus without the tumult which they dreaded. The eight days' respite

from the bitter sentence of death, which their terror, not their mercy, had accorded Him, was to be withdrawn, and the secret blow was to be struck at once.

For before they separated a message reached them which shot a gleam of fierce joy into their hearts, while we may well imagine that it also filled them with something of surprise and awe. Conscious as they must have been in their inmost hearts how deep was the crime which they intended to commit, it must have almost startled them thus to find "the tempting opportunity at once meeting the guilty disposition," and the Evil Spirit making their way straight before their face. They were informed that the man who knew Jesus, who had been with Him, who had been His disciple—nay, more, one of the Twelve—was ready to put an immediate end to their perplexities, and to reopen with them the communication which he had already made.

The house of Caiaphas was probably in or near the Temple precincts. The gates both of the city and of the Temple were usually closed at sundown, but at the time of this vast yearly gathering it was natural that the rules should have been a little relaxed for the general convenience; and when Judas slunk away from his brethren on that fatal evening he would rely on being admitted without difficulty within the city precincts, and into the presence of the assembled elders. He applied accordingly to the "captains" of the Temple, the members of the Levitical guard who had the care of the sacred buildings, and they at once announced his message, and brought him in person before the priests and rulers of the Jews.

Some of the priests had already seen him at their previous meeting; others would doubtless recognize him. The fact that one who had lived with Jesus, who had heard all He had said and seen all He had done—was yet ready to betray Him—strengthened them in their purpose; the fact that they, the hierarchs and nobles, were ready not only to praise but even to reward Judas for what he proposed to do, strengthened



him in his dark and desperate design. As in water face answereth to face, so did the heart of Judas and of the Jews become assimilated by the reflection of mutual sympathy. As iron sharpeneth iron, so did the blunt weapon of his brutal anger give fresh edge to their polished hate.

Whether the hideous demand for blood money had come from him or had been suggested by them; whether it was paid immediately or only after the arrest; whether the wretched and paltry sum given—thirty shekels, the price of the meanest slave—was the total reward, or only the earnest of a further and larger sum—these are questions which would throw a strong light on the character and motives of Judas, but to which the general language of the Evangelists enables us to give no certain answer. The details of the transaction were probably but little known. Neither Judas nor his venerable abettors had any cause to dwell on them with satisfaction. The Evangelists and the early Christians generally, when they speak of Judas, seem to be filled with a spirit of shuddering abhorrence too deep for words. Only one dark fact stood out before their imagination in all its horror, and that was that Judas was a traitor; that Judas had been one of the Twelve, and yet had sold his Lord.

## Chapter 30

### THE LAST SUPPER

It was on the morning of Thursday that some conversation took place between Jesus and His disciples about the Paschal feast. They asked Him where He wished the preparation for it to be made. As He had now withdrawn from all public teaching, and was spending this Thursday, as He had spent the previous day, in complete seclusion, they probably expected that He would eat the Passover at Bethany, which for such purposes had been decided by rabbinical authority to be within the limits of Jerusalem. But His plans were otherwise. He, the true Paschal Lamb, was to be sacrificed once and forever in the Holy City, where it is probable that in that very Passover, and on the very same day, some 260,000 of those lambs of which He was the antitype were destined to be slain.

Accordingly He sent Peter and John to Jerusalem, and appointing for them a sign both mysterious and secret, told them that on entering the gate they would meet a servant carrying a pitcher of water from one of the fountains for evening use; following him, they would reach a house, to the owner of which they were to intimate the intention of the Master to eat the Passover there with His disciples; and this householder—conjectured by some to have been Joseph of Arimathea, by others John Mark—would at once place at their disposal a furnished upper room, ready provided with the requisite table and couches. They found all as Jesus had said, and there “made ready the Passover.”

It was towards the evening, probably when the gathering dusk would prevent all needless observation, that Jesus and His disciples walked from Bethany, by that old familiar road over the Mount of Olives, which His sacred feet were never again destined to traverse until after death. How far they attracted attention, or how it was that He whose person was known to so many—and who, as the great central figure of such great counter-agitations, had, four days before, been accompanied with shouts of triumph, as He would be, on the following day, with yells of insult—could now enter Jerusalem unnoticed with His followers, we cannot tell. We catch no glimpse of the little company till we find them assembled in that “large upper room”—perhaps the very room where three days afterwards the sorrow-stricken apostles first saw their risen Saviour—perhaps the very room where, amid the sound of a rushing mighty wind, each meek brow was first mitered with Pentecostal flame.

When they arrived, the meal was ready, the table spread. The seat of honor was the central one, occupied by the Lord. Each guest reclined at full length, leaning on his left elbow, that his right hand might be free. At the right hand of Jesus reclined the beloved disciple, whose head therefore could, at any moment, be placed upon the breast of his friend and Lord.

It may be that the very act of taking their seats at the table had, once more, stirred up in the minds of the apostles those disputes about precedence which, on previous occasions, our Lord had so tenderly and beautifully rebuked. The mere question of a place at table might seem a matter too infinitesimal and unimportant to ruffle the feelings of good and self-denying men at an hour so supreme and solemn; but that love for “the chief seats” at feasts and elsewhere, which Jesus had denounced in the Pharisees, is not only innate in the human heart but is even so powerful that it has at times caused the most terrific tragedies. But at this moment, when the soul of Jesus was full of such sublime pur-

pose—when He was breathing the pure unmingled air of eternity, and the eternal was to Him, in spite of His mortal investiture, not only the present but the seen—a strife of this kind must have been more than ever painful. It showed how little, as yet, even these His chosen followers had entered into the meaning of His life. It showed that the evil spirits of pride and selfishness were not yet exorcised from their struggling souls. It showed that, even now, they had wholly failed to understand His many and earnest warnings as to the nature of His kingdom, and the certainty of His fate. That some great crisis was at hand—that their Master was to suffer and be slain—they must have partially realized; but they seem to have regarded this as a mere temporary obscuration, to be followed by an immediate divulgence of His splendor, and the setting upon earth of His Messianic throne.

In pained silence Jesus had heard their murmured jealousies, while they were arranging their places at the feast. Not by mere verbal reproof, but by an act more profoundly significant and touching, He determined to teach to them, and to all who love Him, a nobler lesson.

Every Eastern room, if it belongs to any but the very poorest, has the central part of the floor covered with mats, and as a person enters, he lays aside his sandals at the door of the room, mainly in order not to defile the clean white mats with the dust and dirt of the road or streets. Before they reclined at the table, the disciples had doubtless conformed to this cleanly and reasonable custom; but another customary and pleasant habit, which we know that Jesus appreciated, had been neglected. Their feet must have been covered with dust from their walk along the hot and much frequented road from Bethany to Jerusalem, and under such circumstances they would have been refreshed for the festival by washing their feet after putting off their sandals. But to wash the feet was the work of slaves; and since no one offered to perform the kindly office, Jesus Himself, in

His eternal humility and self-denial, rose from His place at the meal to do the menial service which none of His disciples had offered to do for Him. Well may the amazement of the Beloved Disciple show itself in his narrative, as he dwells on every particular of that solemn scene. "Though He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God and was going to God, He arose from the supper and laid aside His garments, and taking a towel, girded Himself." It is probable that in the utterness of self-abnegation, He entirely stripped His upper limbs, as though He had been the meanest slave, and wrapped the towel around His waist. Then pouring water into the large copper basin with which an Oriental house is always provided, He began without a word to wash His disciples' feet, and wipe them dry with the towel which served Him as a girdle. Awe and shame kept them silent until He came to Peter, whose irrepressible emotions found vent in the surprised, half-indignant question, "Lord, dost Thou seek to wash my feet?" Thou, the Son of God, the King of Israel, who hast the words of eternal life—Thou, whose feet Oriental kings should anoint with their costliest spikenard, and penitents bath in precious tears—dost Thou wash Peter's feet? It was the old dread and self-depreciation which, more than three years before, had prompted the cry of the rude fisherman of Galilee, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"; it was the old self-will which, a year before, had expressed itself in the self-confident dissuasion of the elated Man of Rock—"That be far from Thee, Lord; this shall not happen unto Thee." Gently recognizing what was good in His impetuous follower's ejaculation, Jesus calmly tells him that as yet he is too immature to understand the meaning of His actions, though the day should come when their significance should dawn upon him. But Peter, obstinate and rash—as though he felt, even more than his Lord, the greatness of Him that ministered, and the meanness of him to whom the service would be

done—persisted in his opposition: “Never, never, till the end of time,” he impetuously exclaims; “shalt Thou wash my feet?” But then Jesus revealed to him the dangerous self-assertion which lurked in this false humility. “If I wash thee not, thou hast no share with Me.” The calm word changed the whole current of thought and feeling in the warmhearted passionate disciple. “No share with Thee? Oh, forbid it, Heaven! Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!” But, no; once more he must accept what Christ wills, not in his own way, but in Christ’s way. This total washing was not needed. The baptism of his initiation was over; in that laver of regeneration he had been already dipped. Nothing more was needed than the daily cleansing from minor and freshly-contracted stains. “Jesus saith to him, He that is bathed hath no need save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit. And ye are clean”; and then He was forced to add with a deep sigh, “but not all.” The last words were an allusion to His consciousness of one traitorous presence; for He knew, what as yet they knew not, that the hands of the Lord of Life had just washed the traitor’s feet. Oh, strange unfathomable depth of human infatuation and ingratitude! That traitor, with all the black and accursed treachery in his false heart, had seen, had known, had suffered it; had felt the touch of those kind and gentle hands, had been refreshed by the cleansing water, had seen that sacred head bent over his feet, yet stained as they yet were with the hurried secret walk which had taken him into the throng of sanctimonious murderers over the shoulder of Olivet. But for him there had been no purification in that lustral water; neither was the devil within him exorcised by that gentle voice, nor the leprosy of his heart healed by that miracle-producing touch.

The other apostles did not at the moment notice that grievous exception—“but not all.” It may be that their consciences gave to all, even the most faithful, too sad a cause to echo the words, with something of misgiving, to his own

soul. Then Jesus, after having washed their feet, resumed His garments, and once more reclined at the meal. As the meal began, Jesus taught them what His act had meant. Rightly, and with proper respect, they called Him "Master" and "Lord," for so He was; yet, though the Lord is greater than the slave, the Sender greater than His apostle, He their Lord and Master had washed their feet. It was a kind and gracious task, and such ought to be the nature of all their dealings with each other. He had done it to teach them humility, to teach them self-denial, to teach them love: blessed they if they learnt the lesson!

And then again the trouble of His spirit broke forth. He was speaking of those whom He had chosen; He was not speaking of them all. Among the blessed company sat one who even then was drawing on his own head a curse. It had been so with David, whose nearest friend had become His bitterest foe; it was foreordained that it should be so likewise with David's son. Soon should they know with what full foreknowledge He had gone to all that awaited Him; soon should they be able to judge that, just as the man who receives in Christ's name His humblest servant receiveth Him, so the rejection of Him is the rejection of His Father, and that this rejection of the Living God was the crime which at this moment was being committed, and committed in their very midst.

There, next but one to Him, hearing all these words unmoved, full of spite and hatred, utterly hardening his heart, and learning the whole weight of his demoniac possession against that door of mercy which even now and even here His Saviour would have opened to him, sat Judas, the false smile of hypocrisy on his face, but rage, and shame, and greed, and anguish, and treachery in his heart. The near presence of that black iniquity, the failure of even His pathetic lowliness to move or touch the man's hideous purpose, troubled the human heart of Jesus to its inmost depths—wring from Him His agony of yet plainer prediction, "Ver-

ily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me!" That night all, even the best beloved, were to forsake Him, but it was not that; that night even the boldest-hearted was to deny Him with oaths, but it was not that; nay, but one of them was to betray Him. Their hearts misgave them as they listened. Already a deep unspeakable sadness had fallen over the meal. Like the somber and threatening crimson that intermingles with the colors of sunset, a dark omen seemed to be overshadowing them—a shapeless presentiment of evil—an unspoken sense of dread. Their hearts were troubled. All their want of nobility, all their failure in love, all the depth of their selfishness, all the weakness of their faith all crowded upon their memories, and made their consciences afraid. None of them seemed safe from anything, and each read his own self-distrust in his brother-disciple's eye. And hence, at that moment of supreme sadness and almost despair, it was with lips that faltered and cheeks that paled that each asked the humble question, "Lord, is it I?" Better always that question than "Is it he?"—better the penitent watchfulness of a self-condemning humility than the haughty Pharisaism of censorious pride. The very horror that breathed through their question, the very trustfulness which prompted it, involved their acquittal. Jesus only remained silent, in order that even then, if it were possible, there might be time for Judas to repent. The head of John was close to Jesus, and laying it with affectionate trustfulness on his Master's breast, he said in a whisper, "Lord, who is it?" The reply, given in a tone equally low, was heard by John alone, and confirmed the suspicions with which it is evident that the repellent nature of Judas had already inspired him. At Eastern meals all the guests eat with their fingers out of a common dish, and it is common for one at times to dip into the dish a piece of the thin flexible cake of bread which is placed by each, and taking up with it a portion of the meat or rice in the dish, to hand it to another guest. So ordinary an incident of any daily meal would attract no



notice whatever. Jesus handed to the traitor apostle a "sop" of this kind, and this, as He told John, was the sign which should indicate to him, and possibly through him to Peter, which was the guilty member of the little band. And then He added aloud, in words which can have but one significance, in words the most awful and crushing that ever passed His lips, "The Son of Man goeth indeed, as it is written of Him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It were good for that man if he had not been born!" "Words," it has been well said, "of immeasurable ruin, words of immeasurable woe"—and the more terrible because uttered by the lips of immeasurable Love; words capable, if any were capable, of revealing to the lost soul of the traitor all the black gulf of horror that was yawning before his feet. He must have known something of what had passed; he may well have overheard some fragment of the conversation, or at least have had a dim consciousness that in some way it referred to him. He may even have been aware that when his hand met the hand of Jesus over the dish there was some meaning in the action. When the others were questioning among themselves "which was the traitor," he had remained silent in the defiant hardness of contempt or the sullen gloom of guilt; but now—stung, it may be, by some sense of the shuddering horror with which the mere possibility of his guilt was regarded—he nerved himself for the shameful and shameless question. After all the rest had sunk into silence, there grated upon the Saviour's ear that hoarse untimely whisper, in all the bitterness of its defiant mockery—not asking, as the rest had asked, in loving reverence, "Lord, is it I?" but with the cold formal title, "Rabbi, is it I?" Then that low unreproachful answer, "Thou hast said," sealed his guilt. The rest did not hear it; it was probably caught by Peter and John alone; and Judas ate the sop which Jesus had given him, and after the sop Satan entered into him. As all the winds, on some night of storm, riot and howl through the rent walls of some dese-

crated shrine, so through the ruined life of Judas envy and avarice, and hatred and ingratitude, were rushing all at once. In that bewildering chaos of a soul spotted with mortal guilt, the satanic had triumphed over the human; in that dark heart earth and hell were henceforth at one; in that lost soul sin had conceived and brought forth death. "What thou art doing, do more quickly," said Jesus to him aloud. He knew what the words implied; he knew that they meant: "Thy fell purpose is matured; carry it out with no more of these futile hypocrisies and meaningless delays." Judas rose from the feast. The apostles thought that Jesus had bidden him go out and make purchases for tomorrow's Passover, or give something out of the common store which should enable the poor to buy their Paschal lamb. And so from the lighted room, from the banquet, from the blessed company, from the presence of his Lord, He went immediately out, and—as the Beloved Disciple adds, with a shudder of dread significance letting the curtain of darkness fall forever on that appalling figure—"and it was night."

## Chapter 31

### THE LAST DISCOURSE

No sooner had Judas left the room than, as though they had been relieved of some ghastly incubus, the spirits of the little company revived. The presence of that haunted soul lay with a weight of horror on the heart of his Master, and no sooner had he departed than the sadness of the feast seems to have been sensibly relieved. The solemn exultation which dilated the soul of their Lord—that joy like the sense of a boundless sunlight behind the earth-born mists—communicated itself to the spirits of His followers. Now it was that, conscious of the impending separation, and fixed unalterably in His sublime resolve, He opened His heart to the little band of those who loved Him, and spoke among them those farewell discourses preserved for us by John alone, so “rarely mixed of sadness and joys, and studded with mysteries as with emeralds.” “Now,” He said, as though with a sigh of relief, “now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.” The hour of that glorification—the glorification which was to be won through the path of humility and agony—was at hand. The time which remained for Him to be with them was short; as He had said to the Jews, so now He said to them, that whither He was going they could not come. And in telling them this, for the first and last time, He calls them “little children.”

At this point Peter interposed a question. Before Jesus entered on a new topic, he wished for an explanation of something which he had not understood. Why was there this

farewell aspect about the Lord's discourse? "Lord, whither goest thou?"

"Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards."

Peter now understood that death was meant, but why could he not also die? Was he not as ready as Thomas to say, "Let us also go that we may die with Him"? "Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake."

Why? Our Lord might have answered, "Because the heart is deceitful above all things; because thy want of deep humility deceives thee; because it is hidden, even from thyself, how much there still is of cowardice and self-seeking in thy motives." But He would not deal thus with the noble-hearted but weak and impetuous apostle, whose love was sincere, though it did not stand the test. He spares him all reproach; only very gently He repeats the question, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me thrice!" Already it was night; ere the dawn of that fatal morning shuddered in the eastern sky—before the cock-crow, uttered in the deep darkness, prophesied that the dawn was near—Jesus would have begun to lay down His life for Peter; but already by that time the apostle, unmindful even of this warning, should have thrice repudiated his Lord and Saviour, thrice have rejected as a calumny and an insult the mere imputation that he even knew Him. All that Jesus could do to save him from the agony of this moral humiliation—by admonition, by tenderness, by prayer to His Heavenly Father—He had done. He had prayed for him that his faith might not finally fail. Satan indeed had obtained permission to sift them all as wheat, and, in spite of all his self-confidence, in spite of all his protested devotion, in spite of all his imaginary sincerity, he should be but as the chaff. And yet Christ held out to him a gracious hope. He should repent and return to the Lord whom He should deny,

and, when that day should come, Jesus bade him show that truest and most acceptable proof of penitence—the strengthening of others. And if his fall gave only too terrible a significance to his Saviour's warnings, yet his repentance nobly fulfilled those consolatory prophecies; and it is most interesting to find that the very word which Jesus had used to him recurs in his epistle in a connection which shows how deeply it had sunk into his soul.

He bade them not be troubled; they believed, and their faith should find its fruition. He was but leaving them to prepare for them a home in the many mansions of His Father's house. They knew whither He was going, and they knew the way. "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" is the perplexed answer of the melancholy Thomas.

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," answered Jesus; "no man cometh unto the Father but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also; and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him."

Again came one of those naive interruptions—so faithfully and vividly recorded; for nothing can more powerfully tend to prove the utter change which must have passed over their spirits, before men so timid, so carnal, so Judaic, so unenlightened, could be transformed into the apostles whose worth we know, and who—inspired by the facts which they had seen, and by the Holy Spirit who gave them wisdom and utterance—became, before their short lives were ended by violence, the mightiest teachers of the world.

"Lord, show us the Father," said Philip of Bethsaida, "and it sufficeth us!"

"Show us the Father!" What, then, did Philip expect? Some earth-shaking epiphany? Some blinding splendor in the heavens? Had he not yet learnt that He who is invisible cannot be seen by mortal eyes; that the finite cannot attain to the vision of the Infinite; that they who would see God must see no manner of similitudes; that His awful silence

can only be broken to us through the medium of human voices, His being only comprehended by means of the things that He hath made? And had he wholly failed to discover that for these three years he had been walking with God? That neither he, nor any mortal man, could ever know more of God in this world than that which should be revealed of Him by "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father"?

Again there was no touch of anger, only a slight accent of pained surprise in the quiet answer, "Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?"

And then, appealing to His words and to His works as only possible by the indwelling of His Father, He proceeded to unfold to them the coming of the Holy Ghost, and how that Comforter dwelling in them should make them one with the Father and with Him.

At this point of the discourse there was a movement among the little company. "Arise," said Jesus, "let us go hence."

They arose from the table, and united their voices in a hymn.

Before they started their moonlight walk to the Garden of Gethsemane, perhaps while yet they stood around their Lord, He once more spoke to them. First He told them of the need of closest union with Him, if they would bring forth fruit, and be saved from destruction. He clothed this lesson in the allegory of the vine and the branches. After impressing this truth in the vivid form of parable, He showed them how deep a source of joy it would be to them in the persecutions which awaited them from an angry world; and then in fuller, plainer, deeper language than He had ever used before, He told them that, in spite of all the anguish with which they contemplated the coming separation from Him, it was actually better for them that His personal presence should be withdrawn in order that His spirit-

ual presence might be yet nearer to them than it ever had been before. This would be effected by the coming of the Holy Ghost, when He who was now with them should be ever in them. The mission of that Comforter should be to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and He should guide them into all truth, and show them things to come. "He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and show it unto you." And now He was going to His Father; a little while, and they should not see Him; and again a little while, and they should see Him.

The uncertainty as to what He meant carried the disciples once more to questions among themselves during one of the solemn pauses of His discourse. They would gladly have asked Him, but a deep awe was upon their spirits, and they did not dare. Already they had several times broken the current of His thoughts by questions which, though He did not reprove them, had evidently grieved Him by their emptiness, and by the misapprehension which they showed of all that He sought to impress upon them. So their whispered questioning died away into silence, but their Master kindly came to their relief. This, He told them, was to be their brief hour of anguish, but it was to be followed by a joy of which man could not rob them; and to that joy there need be no limit, for whatever might be their need they had but to ask the Father, and it should be fulfilled. To that Father who Himself loved them, for their belief in Him—to that Father, from whom He came, He was now about to return.

The disciples were deeply grateful for these plain and most consoling words. Once more they were unanimous in expressing their belief that He came forth from God. But Jesus sadly checked their enthusiasm. His words had been meant to give them peace in the present, and courage and hope for the future; yet He knew and told them that, in spite of all that they said, the hour was now close at hand

when they should all be scattered in selfish terror, and leave Him alone—yet not alone, because the Father was with Him.

And after these words He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and uttered His great High-Priestly Prayer; first, that His Father would invest His voluntary humanity with the eternal glory of which He had emptied Himself when He took the form of a servant; next, that He would keep through His own name these His loved ones who had walked with Him in the world; and then that He would sanctify and make perfect not these alone, but all the myriads, all the long generations, which should hereafter believe through their word.

And when the tones of this divine prayer were hushed, they left the guest chamber and stepped into the moonlit silence of the Oriental night.



## Chapter 32

### GETHSEMANE—THE AGONY AND THE ARREST

WE are told but of one incident in that last and memorable walk through the midnight to the familiar Garden of Gethsemane. It was a last warning to the disciples in general, to Peter in particular. It may be that the dimness, the silence, the desertion of their position, the dull echo of their footsteps, the stealthy aspect which their movements wore, the agonizing sense that treachery was even now at work, was beginning already to produce an icy chill of cowardice in their hearts; sadly did Jesus turn and say to them that on that very night they should all be offended in Him—all find their connection with Him a stumbling block in their path—and the old prophecy should be fulfilled, "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad." And yet, in spite of all, as a shepherd would He go before them, leading the way to Galilee? They all repudiated the possibility of such an abandonment of their Lord, and Peter, touched already by this apparent distrust of His stability, haunted perhaps by some dread lest Jesus felt any doubt of him, was loudest and most emphatic in his denial. Even if all should be offended, yet never would he be offended. Was it a secret misgiving in his own heart which made his asseveration so prominent and so strong? Not even the repetition of the former warning, that, ere the cock should crow he would thrice have denied his Lord, could shake him from his positive assertion that even the necessity of death

itself should never drive him to such a sin. And Jesus only listened in mournful silence to vows which should so soon be scattered into air.

So they came to Gethsemane, which is about half a mile from the city walls. It was a garden or orchard marked probably by some slight enclosure; and as it had been a place of frequent resort for Jesus and His followers, we may assume that it belonged to some friendly owner.

Jesus knew that the awful hour of His deepest humiliation had arrived—that from this moment till the utterance of that great cry with which He expired nothing remained for Him on earth but the torture of physical pain and the poignancy of mental anguish. All that the human frame can tolerate of suffering was to be heaped upon His shrinking body; every misery that cruel and crushing insult can inflict was to weigh heavy on His soul; and in this torment of body and agony of soul even the high and radiant serenity of His divine spirit was to suffer a short but terrible eclipse. Pain in its acutest sting, shame in its most overwhelming brutality, all the burden of the sin and mystery of man's existence in its apostasy and fall—this was what He must now face in all its most inexplicable accumulation. But one thing remained before the actual struggle, the veritable agony, began. He had to brace His body, to nerve His soul, to calm His spirit by prayer and solitude to meet that hour in which all that is evil in the power of evil should wreak its worst upon the Innocent and Holy. And He must face that hour alone: no human eye must witness, except through the twilight and shadow, the depth of His suffering. Yet He would have gladly shared their sympathy; it helped Him in this hour of darkness to feel that they were near, and that those were nearest who loved Him best. "Stay here," He said to the majority, "while I go there and pray." Leaving them to sleep on the damp grass, each wrapped in his outer garments, He took with Him Peter and James and John, and went about a stone's throw farther. It was well that

Peter should face all that was involved in allegiance to Christ: it was well that James and John should know what was that cup which they had desired pre-eminently to drink. But soon even the society of these chosen and trusted ones was more than He could bear. A grief beyond utterance, a struggle beyond endurance, a horror of great darkness, a giddiness and stupefaction of soul overmastered Him, as with the sinking swoon of an anticipated death. It was a tumult of emotion which none must see. "My soul," He said, "is full of anguish, even unto death. Stay here and keep watch." Reluctantly He tore Himself away from their sustaining tenderness and devotion, and retired yet farther, perhaps out of the moonlight into the shadow. And there, until slumber overpowered them, they were conscious of how dreadful was that paroxysm of prayer and suffering through which He passed. They saw Him sometimes on His knees, sometimes outstretched in prostrate supplication upon the damp ground; they heard snatches of the sounds of murmured anguish in which His humanity pleaded with the divine will of His Father. The actual words might vary, but the substance was the same throughout. "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee! Take away this cup from Me; nevertheless, not what I will but what Thou wilt."

And that prayer in all its infinite reverence and awe was heard; that strong crying and those tears were not rejected. We may not intrude too closely into this scene. It is shrouded in a halo and a mystery into which no footstep may penetrate. We, as we contemplate it, are like those disciples—our senses are confused; our perceptions are not clear. We can but enter into their amazement and sore distress. Half waking, half oppressed with an irresistible weight of troubled slumber, they only felt that they were dim witnesses of unuttered agony, far deeper than anything which they could fathom, as it far transcended all that, even in our purest moments, we can pretend to understand. The place seems haunted by presences of good and evil, struggling

in mighty but silent contest for the eternal victory. They see Him, before whom the demons had fled in howling terror, lying on His face upon the ground. They hear that voice wailing in murmurs of broken agony, which had commanded the wind and the sea, and they obeyed Him. The great drops of anguish which drop from Him in the deathful struggle look to them like heavy goutts of blood. Under the dark shadows of the trees, amid the interrupted moonlight, it seems to them that there is an angel with Him, who supports His failing strength, who enables Him to rise victorious from those first prayers with nothing but the crimson traces of that bitter struggle upon His brow.

Through all this He passed in that hour which, with a recoil of sinless horror beyond our capacity to conceive, foretasted a worse bitterness than the worst bitterness of death. And after a time—victorious indeed, but weary almost to fainting, like His ancestor Jacob, with the struggle of those supplications—He came to seek one touch of human support and human sympathy from the chosen of the chosen—His three apostles. Alas! He found them sleeping. It was an hour of fear and peril; yet no certainty of danger, no love for Jesus, no feeling for His unspeakable dejection had sufficed to hold their eyes waking. Their grief, their weariness, their intense excitement had sought relief in heavy slumber. Even Peter, after all his impetuous promises, lay in deep sleep, for his eyes were heavy. "Simon, sleepest thou?" was all He said. As the sad reproachful sentence fell on their ears, and startled them from their slumbers, "Were ye so unable," He asked, "to watch with Me a single hour? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." And then, not to palliate their failure, but rather to point out the peril of it, "The spirit," He added, "is willing but the flesh is weak."

Once more He left them, and again, with deeper intensity, repeated the same prayer as before, and in a pause of His emotion came back to His disciples. But they had once more

fallen asleep; nor, when He awoke them, could they, in their heaviness and confusion, find anything to say to Him. Well might He have said, in the words of David, "Thy rebuke hath broken My heart; I am full of heaviness; I looked for some to have pity on Me, but there was no man, neither found I any to comfort Me."

For the third and last time—but now with a deeper calm, and a brighter serenity of that triumphant confidence which had breathed through the High-Priestly Prayer—He withdrew to find His only consolation in communing with God. And there He found all that He needed. Before that hour was over He was prepared for the worst that Satan or man could do. He knew all that would befall Him; perhaps He had already caught sight of the irregular glimmering of lights as His pursuers descended from the Temple precincts. Yet there was no trace of agitation in His quiet words when, coming a third time and finding them once more sleeping, "Sleep on now," He said, "and take your rest. It is enough. The hour is come. Lo! the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners."

Yes, it was more than time to rise, for while saints had slumbered sinners had plotted and toiled in exaggerated preparation. While they slept in their heavy anguish, the traitor had been very wakeful in his active malignity. More than two hours had passed since from the lighted chamber of their happy communion he had plunged into the night, and those hours had been very fully occupied. He had gone to the high priests and Pharisees, agitating them and hurrying them on with his own passionate precipitancy. They were going against One who was deserted and defenseless, yet the soldiers were armed with swords, and even the promiscuous throng had provided themselves with sticks. They were going to seize One who would make no attempt at flight or concealment, and the full moon shed its luster on their unhallowed expedition; yet, lest He should escape them in some limestone grotto, or in the deep shade of the olives, they carried

lanterns, and torches in their hands. It is evident that they made their movements as noiseless and stealthy as possible; but at night a deep stillness hangs over an Oriental city, and so large a throng could not move unnoticed. Already, as Jesus was awaking His sleepy disciples, His ears had caught in the distance the clank of swords, the tread of hurrying footsteps, the ill-suppressed tumult of an advancing crowd. He knew all that awaited Him; He knew that the quiet garden which He had loved, and where He had so often held happy intercourse with His disciples, was familiar to the traitor. Those unwonted and hostile sounds, that red glare of lamps and torches athwart the moonlit interspaces of the olive yards, were enough to show that Judas had betrayed the secret of His retirement, and was even now at hand.

And even as Jesus spoke the traitor himself appeared. Overdoing his part—acting in the too-hurried impetuosity of a crime so hideous that he dared not pause to think—he pressed forward into the enclosure, and was in front of all the rest. “Comrade,” said Jesus to him as he hurried forward, “the crime for which thou art come—” The sentence seems to have been cut short by the deep agitation of His spirit, nor did Judas return any answer, intent only on giving to his confederates his shameful preconcerted signal. “He whom I kiss,” he had said to them, “the same is He. Seize Him at once, and lead Him away safely.” And so, advancing to Jesus with his usual cold title of address, he exclaimed, “Rabbi, Rabbi, hail!” and profaned the sacred cheek of his Master with a kiss of overacted salutation. “Judas,” said Jesus to him, with stern and sad reproach, “dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?” These words were enough, for they simply revealed the man to himself, by stating his hideous act in all its simplicity; and the method of his treachery was so unparalleled in its heinousness, so needless and spontaneously wicked, that more words would have been superfluous. With feelings that the very devils

might have pitied, the wretch slunk back to the door of the enclosure, toward which the rest of the crowd were now beginning to press.

"Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" was the eager question of Peter, and the other disciple provided with a weapon; for, being within the garden, the apostles were still unaware of the number of the captors. Jesus did not at once answer the question for no sooner had He repelled the villainous falsity of Judas than He Himself stepped out of the enclosure to face His pursuers. Not flying, not attempting to hide Himself, He stood there before them in the full moonlight in His unarmed and lonely majesty, shaming by His calm presence their superfluous torches and superfluous arms.

"Whom are ye seeking?" He asked.

The question was not objectless. It was asked, as John points out, to secure His apostles from all molestation; and we may suppose also that it served to make all who were present the witnesses of His arrest, and so to prevent the possibility of any secret assassination or foul play.

"Jesus of Nazareth," they answered.

Their excitement and awe preferred this indirect answer, though if there could have been any doubt as to who the speaker was, Judas was there—the eye of the Evangelist noticed him, trying in vain to lurk amid the serried ranks of the crowd—to prevent any possible mistake which might have been caused by the failure of his premature and therefore disconcerted signal.

"I am He," said Jesus.

While they stood cowering and struggling, He again asked them, "Whom are ye seeking?" Again they replied, "Jesus of Nazareth." "I told you," He answered, "that I am He. If, then, ye are seeking Me, let these go away." For He Himself had said in His prayer, "Of those whom Thou hast given Me have I lost none."

The words were a signal to the apostles that they could

no longer render Him any service, and that they might now consult their own safety if they would. But when they saw that He meant to offer no resistance, that He was indeed about to surrender Himself to His enemies, some pulse of nobleness or of shame throbbed in the impetuous soul of Peter; and hopeless and useless as all resistance had now become, he yet drew his sword, and with a feeble and ill-aimed blow severed the ear of a man named Malchus, a servant of the high priest. Instantly Jesus stopped the ill-timed and dangerous struggle. "Return that sword of thine into its place," He said to Peter, "for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword"; and then He reproachfully asked His rash disciple whether he really supposed that He could not escape if He would; whether the mere breathing of a prayer would not secure for Him—had He not voluntarily intended to fulfill the Scriptures by drinking the cup which His Father had given Him—the aid not of twelve timid apostles but of more than twelve legions of angels. And then, turning to the soldiers who were holding Him, He said, "Suffer ye thus far," and in one last act of miraculous mercy touched and healed the wound.

In the confusion of the night this whole incident seems to have passed unnoticed except by a very few. At any rate, it made no impression upon these hardened men. Their terror had quite vanished, and had been replaced by insolent confidence. The Great Prophet had voluntarily resigned Himself; He was their helpless captive. No thunder had rolled; no angel flashed down from heaven for His miraculous deliverance; no miraculous fire devoured amongst them. They saw before them nothing but a weary unarmed man, whom one of His own intimate followers had betrayed, and whose arrest was simply watched in helpless agony by a few terrified Galileans. They had fast hold of Him, and already some chief priests, and elders, and leading officers of the Temple guard had ventured to come out of the dark background from which they had securely seen His capture,



and to throng about Him in insulting curiosity. To these especially He turned, and said to them, "Have ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the Temple ye did not stretch out your hands against Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness." Those fatal words quenched the last gleam of hope in the minds of His followers. "Then His disciples, all of them"—even the fiery Peter and the loving John—"forsook Him, and fled."

Jesus was now absolutely alone in the power of His enemies. At the command of the tribune His hands were tied behind His back, and forming a close array around Him, the Romans soldiers, followed and surrounded by the Jewish servants, led Him once more through the night, over Kedron, and up the steep city slope beyond it, to the palace of the high priest.

## Chapter 33

### JESUS BEFORE THE PRIESTS AND THE SANHEDRIN

WHEN the tribune, who commanded the detachment of Romans soldiers, had ordered Jesus to be bound, they led Him away without an attempt at opposition. Midnight was already passed as they hurried Him, from the moonlit shadows of green Gethsemane, through the hushed streets of the sleeping city, to the palace of the high priest. It seems to have been jointly occupied by the prime movers in this black iniquity, Annas and his son-in-law, Joseph Caiaphas.

Since the days of Herod the Great, the high priesthood had been degraded from a permanent religious office to a temporary secular distinction; and even had it been otherwise, the rude legionaires would probably care less than nothing to whom they led their victim. If the tribune condescended to ask a question about it, it would be easy for the captain of the Temple—who may very probably have been at this time, as we know was the case subsequently, one of the sons of Annas himself—to represent Annas as the “deputy,” or the president, of the Sanhedrin—and so as the proper person to conduct the preliminary investigation.

Accordingly, it was before Hanan that Jesus stood first as a prisoner at the tribunal. It was before this alien and intriguing hierarch that there began, at midnight, the first stage of that long and terrible trial.

And there was good reason why John should have preserved for us this phase of the trial, and preserved it ap-

parently for the express reason that it had been omitted by the other Evangelists. It is not till after a lapse of years that people can always see clearly the prime mover in events with which they had been contemporary. At the time, the ostensible agent is the one usually regarded as most responsible, though he may be in reality a mere link in the official machinery. But if there were one man who was more guilty than any other of the death of Jesus, that man was Hanan. His advanced age, his preponderant dignity, his worldly position and influence, as one who stood on the best terms with the Herods and procurators, gave an exceptional weight to his prerogative decision.

Anxious, at all hazards, to trump up some available charge of secret sedition, or of unorthodox teaching, he questioned Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine. The answer, for all its calmness, involved a deep reproof. "I have spoken openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogues and in the Temple, where all the Jews come together, and in secret I said nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Lo! these"—pointing, perhaps, to the bystanders—"know what I said to them." The emphatic repetition of the "I," and its unusually significant position at the end of the sentence, show that a contrast was intended, as though He had said, "This midnight, this sedition, this secrecy, this indecent mockery of justice, are yours, not Mine!" Even the minions of Annas felt the false position of their master under this calm rebuke; they felt that before the transparent innocence of this youthful rabbi of Nazareth the hoary hypocrisy of the crafty Sadducee was abashed. "Answerest Thou the high priest so?" said one of them with a burst of illegal insolence; and then, unreprieved by this priestly violator of justice, He profaned with the first infamous blow the sacred face of Christ. Then first that face which, as the poet preacher says, "the angels stare upon with wonder as infants at a bright sunbeam," was smitten by a contemptible slave. The insult was borne with

noble meekness. Even Paul, when similarly insulted, flaming into sudden anger at such a grossly illegal violence, had scathed the ruffian and his abettor with "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall"; but He, the Son of God—He who was infinitely above all apostles and all angels—with no flash of anger, with no heightened tone of natural indignation, quietly reproved the impudent transgressor with the words, "If I spoke evil, bear witness concerning the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me?" It was clear that nothing more could be extorted from Him; that before such a tribunal He would brook no further question. Bound, in sign that He was to be condemned—though unheard and unsentenced—Annas sent Him across the courtyard to Joseph Caiaphas, his son-in-law, who, not by the grace of God but by the grace of the Roman procurator, was the titular high priest.

Caiaphas, like his father-in-law, was a Sadducee—equally astute and unscrupulous with Annas, but endowed with less force of character and will. In his house took place the second private and irregular stage of the trial. There—for though the poor apostles could not watch for one hour in sympathetic prayer, these nefarious plotters could watch all night in their deadly malice—a few of the most desperate enemies of Jesus among the priests and Sadducees were met. To form a session of the Sanhedrin there must at least have been twenty-three members present. And we may perhaps be allowed to conjecture that this particular body before which Christ was now convened was mainly composed of priests.

Instead of trying, as Hanan had done, to overawe and entangle Jesus with insidious questions, and so to involve Him in a charge of apostasy, they now tried to brand Him with the crime of public error. In point of fact their own bitter divisions and controversies made the task of convicting Him a very difficult one. If they dwelt on any supposed opposition to civil authority, that would rather enlist the sympathies of the Pharisees in His favor; if they dwelt on sup-

posed Sabbath violations or neglect of traditional observances, that would accord with the views of the Sadducees. The Sadducees dared not complain of His cleansing of the Temple; the Pharisees, or those who represented them, found it useless to advert to His denunciations of tradition. But Jesus, infinitely nobler than His own noblest apostle, would not foment these latent animosities, or evoke for His own deliverance a contest of these slumbering prejudices. He did not disturb the temporary compromise which united them in a common hatred against Himself. Since, therefore, they had nothing else to go upon, the chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin "sought false witness"—such is the terribly simple expression of the Evangelists—"sought false witness against Jesus to put Him to death." Many men, with a greedy, unnatural depravity, seek false witness—mostly of the petty, ignorable, malignant sort; and the powers of evil usually supply it to them.

At last two came forward, whose false witness looked more promising. They had heard Him say something about destroying the Temple, and rebuilding it in three days. According to one version His expression had been, "I can destroy this Temple"; according to another. "I will destroy this Temple." The fact was that He said neither, but "Destroy this Temple"; and the imperative had been addressed, hypothetically, to them. They were to be the destroyers; He had but promised to rebuild. But even this semblable perjury utterly broke down, and Jesus listened in silence while His disunited enemies hopelessly confuted each other's testimony. Guilt often breaks into excuses where perfect innocence is dumb. He simply suffered His false accusers and false listeners to entangle themselves in the hideous coil of their own malignant lies, and the silence of the innocent Jesus atoned for the excuses of the guilty Adam.

But that majestic silence troubled, thwarted, confounded, maddened them. It weighed them down for the moment with an incubus of intolerable self-condemnation. They felt,

before that silence, as if they were the culprits, He the judge. And as every poisoned arrow of their carefully-provided perjuries fell harmless at His feet, as though blunted on the diamond shield of His white innocence, they began to fear lest, after all, their thirst for His blood would go unslaked, and their whole plot fail.

Then Caiaphas was overcome with a paroxysm of fear and anger. Starting up from his judgment seat, and striding into the midst—with what a voice, with what an attitude, we may well imagine!—"Answerest Thou nothing?" he exclaimed. "What is it that these witness against Thee?" Had not Jesus been aware that these His judges were willfully feeding on ashes and seeking lies, He might have answered; but now His awful silence remained unbroken.

Then, reduced to utter despair and fury, this false high priest—with marvelous inconsistency, with disgraceful illegality—still standing as it were with a threatening attitude over his prisoner, exclaimed, "I adjure Thee by the living God to tell us"—what? "Whether Thou art a malefactor?" "Whether Thou hast secretly taught sedition?" "Whether Thou hast openly uttered blasphemy?"—no, but (and surely the question showed the dread misgiving which lay under all their deadly conspiracy against Him)—"Whether Thou art the Christ, the Son of God."

Strange question to a bound, defenseless, condemned criminal; and strange question from such a questioner—a high priest of his people! Strange question from the judge who was hounding on his false witnesses against the prisoner! Yet so adjured, and to such a question, Jesus could not be silent; on such a point He could not leave Himself open to misinterpretation. In the days of His happier ministry, when they would have taken Him by force to make Him a king—in the days when to claim the Messiahship in their sense would have been to meet all their passionate prejudices halfway, and to place Himself upon the topmost pinnacle of their adoring homage—in

those days He had kept His title of Messiah utterly in the background: but now, at this awful decisive moment, when death was near—when, humanly speaking, nothing could be gained, everything must be lost, by the avowal—there thrilled through all the ages—thrilled through that eternity, which is the synchronism of all the future, and all the present, and all the past—the solemn answer, “I am, and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” In that answer the thunder rolled—a thunder louder than at Sinai, though the ears of the cynic and the Sadducee heard it not then, nor hear it now. In overacted and ill-omened horror, the unjust judge who had thus supplemented the failure of the perjuries which he had vainly sought—the false high priest rending his linen robes before the True—demanded of the assembly His instant condemnation.

“Blasphemy!” he exclaimed; “what further need have we of witnesses? See, now ye heard His blasphemy! What is your decision?” And with the confused tumultuous cry, “He is *ish maveth*,” “a man of death,” “guilty of death,” the dark conclave was broken up, and the second stage of the trial of Jesus was over.

## Chapter 34

### JESUS BEFORE PILATE

"SUFFERED under Pontius Pilate"—so, in every creed of Christendom, is the unhappy name of the Roman procurator handed down to eternal execration. Yet the object of introducing that name was not to point a moral but to fix an epoch; and, in point of fact, of all the civil and ecclesiastical rulers before whom Jesus was brought to judgment, Pilate was the least guilty of malice and hatred, the most anxious, if not to spare His agony, at least to save His life.

It was probably about seven in the morning that, thinking to overawe the procurator by their numbers and their dignity, the imposing procession of the Sanhedrists and priests, headed, no doubt, by Caiaphas himself, conducted Jesus, with a cord round His neck, from their Hall of Meeting over the lofty bridge which spanned the Valley of the Tyropeon, in presence of all the city, with the bound hands of a sentenced criminal, a spectacle to angels and to men.

Disturbed at this early hour, and probably prepared for some Paschal disturbance more serious than usual, Pilate entered the Hall of Judgment, whither Jesus had been led, in company (as seems clear) with a certain number of His accusers and of those most deeply interested in His case. But the great Jewish hierarchs, shrinking from ceremonial pollution, though not from moral guilt—afraid of heaven, though not afraid of innocent blood—refused to enter the Gentile's hall, lest they should be polluted, and should consequently be unable that night to eat the Passover. In no



good humor, but in haughty and half-necessary condescension to what he would regard as the despicable superstitions of an inferior race, Pilate goes out to them under the burning early sunlight of an Eastern spring. One haughty glance takes in the pompous assemblage of priestly notables, and the turbulent mob of this singular people, equally distasteful to him as a Roman and as a ruler; and observing in that one glance the fierce passions of the accusers, as he had already noted the meek ineffable grandeur of their victim, his question is sternly brief: "What accusation bring ye against this man?" The question took them by surprise, and showed them that they must be prepared for an unconcealed antagonism to all their purposes. Pilate evidently intended a judicial inquiry; *they* had expected only a license to kill, and to kill not by a Jewish method of execution but by one which they regarded as more horrible and accursed. "If He were not a malefactor," is their indefinite and surly answer, "we would not have delivered Him up unto thee." But Pilate's Roman knowledge of law, his Roman instinct of justice, his Roman contempt for their murderous fanaticism, made him not choose to act upon a charge so entirely vague, nor give the sanction of his tribunal to their dark disorderly decrees. He would not deign to be an executioner where he had not been a judge. "Very well," he answered, with a superb contempt, "take ye Him and judge Him according to your law." But now they are forced to the humiliating confession that, having been deprived of the *jus gladii*, they cannot inflict the death which alone will satisfy them; for indeed it stood written in the eternal councils that Christ was to die, not by Jewish stoning or strangulation, but by that Roman form of execution which inspired the Jews with a nameless horror, even by crucifixion; that He was to reign from His cross—to die by that most fearfully significant and typical of death—public, slow, conscious, accursed, agonizing—worse even than burning—the worst type of all possible deaths, and the worst result

of that curse which He was to remove forever. Dropping, therefore, for the present the charge of blasphemy, which did not suit their purpose, they burst into a storm of invectives against Him, in which are discernible the triple accusations, that He perverted the nation, that He forbade to give tribute, that He called Himself a king. All three charges were flagrantly false, and the third all the more so because it included a grain of truth. But since they had not confronted Jesus with any proofs or witnesses, Pilate—in whose whole bearing and language is manifest the disgust embittered by fear with which the Jews inspired him—deigns to notice the third charge alone, and proceeds to discover whether the confession of the prisoner—always held desirable by Roman institutions—would enable him to take any cognizance of it. Leaving the impatient Sanhedrin and the raging crowd, he retired into the Judgment Hall. John alone preserves for us the memorable scene. Jesus, though not “in soft clothing,” though not a denizen of kings’ houses, had been led up the noble flight of stairs, over the floors of agate and lazuli, under the gilded roofs, ceiled with cedar and painted with vermilion, which adorned but one abandoned palace of a great king of the Jews. There, amid those voluptuous splendors, Pilate—already interested, already feeling in this prisoner before him some nobleness which touched his Roman nature—asked Him in pitying wonder, “Art *Thou* the King of the Jews?” There is a royalty which Pilate, and men like Pilate, cannot understand—a royalty of holiness, a supremacy of self-sacrifice. To say “No” would have been to belie the truth; to say “Yes” would have been to mislead the questioner. “Sayest thou this of thyself?” He answered with gentle dignity, “or did others tell it thee of Me?” “Am I a *Jew*?” is the disdainful answer. “Thy own nation and the chief priests delivered Thee unto me. What hast Thou *done*?” Done?—works of wonder, and mercy, and power, and innocence, and these alone. But Jesus reverts to the first question, now that He has prepared

Pilate to understand the answer: Yes, He is a king; but not of this world; not from hence; not one for whom His servants would fight. "Thou *art* a king, then?" said Pilate to Him in astonishment. Yes! but a king not in this region of falsities and shadows, but one born to bear witness unto the truth, and one whom all who were of the truth should hear. "Truth," said Pilate impatiently, "what is *truth*?" What had he—a busy, practical Roman governor—to do with such dim abstractions? What bearing had they on the question of life and death? What unpractical hallucination, what fairyland of dreaming phantasy was this? Yet, though he contemptuously put the discussion aside, he was touched and moved. He wholly set aside the floating idea of an un-earthly royalty; he saw in the prisoner before his tribunal an innocent and high-souled dreamer, nothing more. And so, leaving Jesus there, he went out again to the Jews, and pronounced his first emphatic and unhesitating acquittal: "I find in Him no fault at all."

But this public decided acquittal only kindled fury of His enemies into yet fiercer flame. After all that they had hazarded, after all that they had inflicted, after the sleepless night of their plots, adjurations, insults, was their purpose to be foiled after all by the intervention of the very Gentiles on whom they had relied for its bitter consummation? Should this victim whom they had thus clutched in their deadly grasp be rescued from high priests and rulers by the contempt or the pity of an insolent heathen? It was too intolerable! Their voices rose in wilder tumult. He had upset the people with His teaching through the length and breadth of the land, beginning from Galilee, even as far as here.

Amid these confused and passionate exclamations the practiced ear of Pilate caught the name of "Galilee," and he understood that Galilee had been the chief scene of the ministry of Jesus. Eager for a chance of dismissing a business of which he was best pleased to be free, he proposed, by a master-stroke of astute policy, to get rid of an embar-

raising prisoner, to save himself from a disagreeable decision, and to do an unexpected complaisance to the unfriendly Galilean tetrarch, who, as usual, had come to Jerusalem—nominally to keep the Passover, really to please his subjects, and to enjoy the sensations and festivities offered at that season by the densely-crowded capital. Accordingly, Pilate, secretly glad to wash his hands of a detestable responsibility, sent Jesus to Herod Antipas. And so, through the thronged and narrow streets, amid the jeering, raging multitudes, the weary Sufferer was dragged once more.

Antipas was rejoiced beyond all things to see Jesus. He had long been wanting to see Him because of the rumors he had heard; and this murderer of the prophets hoped that Jesus would, in compliment to royalty, amuse by some miracle his gaping curiosity. He harangued and questioned Him in many words, but gained not so much as one syllable in reply. Our Lord confronted all his ribald questions with the majesty of silence. To such a man, who even changed scorn into a virtue, speech would clearly have been a profanation. Then all the savage vulgarity of the man came out through the thin veneer of a superficial cultivation. For the second time Jesus is derided—derided this time as Priest and Prophet. Herod and his corrupt hybrid myrmidons “set Him at nought”—treated Him with the insolence of a studied contempt. Mocking His innocence and His misery in a festal and shining robe, the empty and wicked prince sent Him back to the procurator, to whom he now became half reconciled after a long standing enmity. But he contented himself with these cruel insults.

And now, as He stood once more before the perplexed and wavering governor, began the sixth, the last, the most agitating and agonizing phase of this terrible inquisition. Now was the time for Pilate to have acted on a clear and right conviction, and saved himself forever from the guilt of innocent blood. Now came the golden opportunity for him to vindicate the grandeur of his country's imperial

justice, and, as he had pronounced Him absolutely innocent, to set Him absolutely free. But exactly at that point he wavered and temporized. The dread of another insurrection haunted him like a nightmare. He was willing to go halfway to please these dangerous sectaries. To justify them, as it were, in their accusation, he would chastise Jesus—scourge Him publicly, as though to render His pretensions ridiculous—disgrace and ruin Him—“make Him seem vile in their eyes”—and *then* set Him free. And this notion of setting Him free suggested to him *another* resource of tortuous policy. Both he and the people almost simultaneously be-thought themselves that it had always been a Paschal boon to liberate at the feast some condemned prisoner. He offered, therefore, to make the acquittal of Jesus an act not of imperious justice but of artificial grace.

In making this suggestion—in thus flagrantly tampering with his innate sense of right, and resigning against his will the best prerogative of his authority—he was already acting in spite of a warning which he had received. That first warning consisted in the deep misgiving, the powerful presentiment, which overcame him as he looked on his bowed and silent prisoner. But, as though to strengthen him in his resolve to prevent an absolute failure of *all* justice, he now received a *second* solemn warning—and one which to an ordinary Roman, and a Roman who remembered Caesar's murder and Calpurnia's dream, might well have seemed divinely sinister. His own wife ventured to send him a public message, even as he sat there on his tribunal, that, in the morning hours, when dreams are true, she had had a troubled and painful dream about that Just Man; and, bolder than her husband, she bade him beware how he molested Him.

His tortuous policy recoiled on his own head, and rendered impossible his own wishes. The Nemesis of his past wrongdoing was that he could no longer do right. Hounded on by the priests and Sanhedrists, the people impetuously

claimed the Paschal boon of which he had reminded them; but in doing so they unmasked still more decidedly the sinister nature of their hatred against their Redeemer. For while they were professing to rage against the asserted seditiousness of One who was wholly obedient and peaceful, they shouted for the liberation of a man whose notorious sedition had been also stained by brigandage and murder. Loathing the innocent, they loved the guilty, and claimed the procurator's grace on behalf not of Jesus of Nazareth but of a man who, in the fearful irony of circumstances, was also called Jesus—Jesus Bar-Abbas—who not only *was* what they falsely said of Christ, a leader of sedition, but also a robber and a murderer. It was fitting that *they*, who had preferred an abject Sadducee to their true priest, and an incestuous Idumean to their Lord and King, should deliberately prefer a murderer to their Messiah.

The people, persuaded by their priests, clamored for the liberation of the rebel and the robber. To him every hand was pointed; for him every voice was raised. For the Holy, the Harmless, the Undefined—for Him whom a thousand hosannas had greeted but five days before—no word of pity or of pleading found an utterance. "He was despised and rejected of men."

Deliberately putting the question to them, Pilate heard with scornful indignation their deliberate choice; and then, venting his bitter disdain and anger in taunts, which did but irritate them more, without serving any good purpose, "What, then," he scornfully asked them, "do ye wish me to do with the King of the Jews?" Then first broke out the mad scream, "Crucify! Crucify Him!" In vain, again and again, in the pauses of the tumult, Pilate insisted, obstinately indeed, but with more and more feebleness of purpose—for none but a man more innocent than Pilate, even if he were a Roman governor, could have listened without quailing to the frantic ravings of an Oriental mob—"Why, what evil hath He done?" "I found no cause of death in Him." "I

will chastise Him and let Him go." Such half-willed opposition was wholly unavailing. It only betrayed to the Jews the inward fears of their procurator, and practically made them masters of the situation. Again and again, with wilder and wilder vehemence, they rent the air with those hideous yells—"Away with this man." "Loose unto us Bar-Abbas." "Crucify! Crucify!"

For a moment Pilate seemed utterly to yield to the storm. He let Bar-Abbas free: he delivered Jesus over to be scourged. This scourging was the ordinary preliminary to crucifixion and other forms of capital punishment. It was a punishment so truly horrible that the mind revolts at it; and it has long been abolished by that compassion of mankind which has been so greatly intensified, and in some degree even created, by the gradual comprehension of Christian truth. The unhappy sufferer was publicly stripped, was tied by the hands in a bent position to a pillar, and then, on the tense quivering nerves of the naked back, the blows were inflicted with leathern thongs, weighted with jagged edges of bone and lead; sometimes even the blows fell by accident—sometimes, with terrible barbarity, were purposely struck—on the face and eyes. It was a punishment so hideous that, under its lacerating agony, the victim generally fainted, often died; still more frequently a man was sent away to perish under the mortification and nervous exhaustion which ensued. And this awful cruelty, on which we dare not dwell—this cruelty which makes the heart shudder and grow cold—was followed immediately by the third and bitterest derision—the derision of Christ as King.

The low vile soldiery of the Praetorium—not Romans, who might have had more sense of the inborn dignity of the silent sufferer, but mostly the mere mercenary scum and dregs of the provinces—led Him into their barrack-room, and there mocked, in their savage hatred, the King whom they had tortured. Around the brows of Jesus, in wanton mimicry of the emperor's laurel, they twisted a green wreath

of thorny leaves; in His tied and trembling hands they placed a reed for scepter; from His torn and bleeding shoulders they stripped the white robe with which Herod had mocked Him—which must now have been all soaked with blood—and flung on Him an old scarlet paludament—some cast-off war cloak, with its purple laticlave, from the Praetorian wardrobe. This, with feigned solemnity, they buckled over His right shoulder, with its glittering fibula; and then—each with his derisive homage of bended knee—each with his infamous spitting—each with the blow over the head from the reed scepter, which His bound hands could not hold—they kept passing before Him with their mock salutation of “Hail, King of the Jews!”

Even now, even yet, Pilate wished, hoped, even strove to save Him. He might represent this frightful scourging not as the preliminary to crucifixion but as an inquiry by torture, which had failed to elicit any further confession. And as Jesus came forth—as He stood beside him with that martyr-form on the beautiful mosaic of the tribunal—the spots of blood upon His green wreath of torture, the mark of blows and spitting on His countenance, the weariness of His deathful agony upon the sleepless eyes, the *sagum* of faded scarlet, darkened by the weals of His lacerated back, and dropping, it may be, its stains of crimson upon the tessellated floor—even then, even so, in that hour of His extremest humiliation—yet, as He stood in the grandeur of His holy calm on that lofty tribunal above the yelling crowd, there shone all over Him so Godlike a pre-eminence, so divine a nobleness, that Pilate broke forth with that involuntary exclamation which has thrilled with emotion so many million hearts—“Behold the Man!”

But his appeal only woke a fierce outbreak of the scream “Crucify! Crucify!” The mere sight of Him, even in this His unspeakable shame and sorrow, seemed to add fresh fuel to their hate. In vain the heathen soldier appeals for humanity to the Jewish priest; no heart throbbed with re-



sponsive pity; no voice of compassion broke that monotonous yell of "Crucify!"—the howling refrain of their wild "liturgy of death." The Roman who had shed blood like water, on the field of battle, in open massacre, in secret assassination, might well be supposed to have an icy and a stony heart; but yet icier and stonier was the heart of those unscrupulous hypocrites and worldly priests. "Take ye Him, and crucify Him," said Pilate, in utter disgust, "for I find no fault in Him." What an admission from a Roman judge! "So far as I can see, He is wholly innocent; yet if you *must* crucify Him, take Him and crucify. I cannot approve of, but I will readily connive at, your violation of the law." Boldly they fling to the winds all question of a political offense, and with all their hypocritical pretenses calcined by the heat of their passion, they shout, "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself a Son of God."

With all his conscience in a tumult, for the third and last time Pilate mounted his tribunal, and made one more desperate effort. He led Jesus forth, and looking at Him, as He stood silent and in agony, but calm, on that shining Gabbatha, above the brutal agitations of the multitude, he said to those frantic rioters, as with a flash of genuine conviction, "Behold your King!" But to the Jews it sounded like shameful scorn to call that beaten insulted Sufferer their King. A darker stream mingled with the passions of the raging, swaying crowd. Among the shouts of "Crucify," ominous threatenings began for the first time to be mingled. It was now nine o'clock, and for nearly three hours had they been raging and waiting there. The shame of Caesar began to be heard in wrathful murmurs. "Shall I crucify your King?" he had asked, venting the rage and soreness of his heart in taunts on them. "We have no king but Caesar" answered the Sadducees and priests, flinging to the winds every national impulse and every Messianic hope. "If thou let this Man go," shouted the mob again and again, "thou art not Caesar's friend. Everyone who tries to make himself

a king speaketh against *Caesar*." And at that dark terrible name of Caesar, Pilate trembled. It was a name to conjure with. It mastered him. Panic-stricken, the unjust judge, in obedience to his own terrors, consciously betrayed the innocent victim to the anguish of death. He who had so often abused authority was now rendered impotent to exercise it, for once, on the side of right. At this, or some early period of the trial, he went through the solemn farce of trying to absolve his conscience from the guilt. He sent for water; he washed his hands before the multitude! He said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it." Did he think thus to wash away his guilt? He could wash his hands; could he wash his heart? The thought was instantly drowned in a yell, the most awful, the most hideous, the most memorable that history records: "His blood be on us and on our children." Then Pilate finally gave way. He delivered Him unto them, "that He might be crucified."

## Chapter 35

### THE CRUCIFIXION

*"I, miles, expedi crucem"* ("Go, soldier, get ready the cross"). In some such formula of terrible import Pilate must have given his final order. It was now probably about nine o'clock, and the execution followed immediately upon the judgment. The time required for the necessary preparation would not be very long, and during this brief pause the soldiers, whose duty it was to see that the sentence was carried out, stripped Jesus of the scarlet war-cloak, now dyed with the yet deeper stains of blood, and clad Him again in His own garments. When the cross had been prepared they laid it—or possibly only one of the beams of it—upon His shoulders, and led Him to the place of punishment. The nearness of the great feast, the myriads who were present in Jerusalem, made it desirable to seize the opportunity for striking terror into all Jewish malefactors. Two were, therefore, selected for execution at the same time with Jesus—two brigands and rebels of the lowest stamp. Their crosses were laid upon them, a manipule of soldiers in full armor were marshaled under the command of their centurion, and, amid thousands of spectators, coldly inquisitive or furiously hostile, the procession started on its way.

His tottering footsteps, if not His actual falls under that fearful load, made it evident that He lacked the physical strength to carry it from the Praetorium to Golgotha. Even if they did not pity His feebleness, the Roman soldiers would naturally object to the consequent hindrance and delay.

But they found an easy method to solve the difficulty. They had not proceeded farther than the city gate, when they met a man coming from the country, who was known to the early Christians as "Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus"; and perhaps, on some hint from the accompanying Jews that Simon sympathized with the teaching of the Sufferer, they impressed him without the least scruple into their odious service.

They came to the fatal place, called Golgotha, or, in its Latin form, Calvary—that is, "a skull." Why it is so called is not known. It may conceivably have been a well-known place of execution; or possibly the name may imply a bare, rounded, scalplike elevation. It is constantly called the "hill of Golgotha," or of Calvary; but the Gospels merely call it "a place," and not a hill.

The three crosses were laid on the ground—that of Jesus, which was doubtless taller than the other two, being placed in bitter scorn in the midst. Perhaps the crossbeam was now nailed to the upright, and certainly the title, which had either been borne by Jesus fastened round His neck, or carried by one of the soldiers in front of Him, was now nailed to the summit of His cross. Then He was stripped naked of all His clothes, and then followed the most awful moment of all. He was laid down upon the implement of torture. His arms were stretched along the crossbeams; and at the center of the open palms, the point of a huge iron nail was placed, which, by the blow of a mallet, was driven home into the wood. Then through either foot separately, or possibly through both together as they were placed one over the other, another huge nail tore its way through the quivering flesh. Whether the sufferer was also bound to the cross we do not know; but to prevent the hands and feet being torn away by the weight of the body, which could not "rest upon nothing but four great wounds," there was, about the center of the cross, a wooden projection strong enough to

support, at least in part, a human body which soon became a weight of agony.

It was probably at this moment of inconceivable horror that the voice of the Son of Man was heard uplifted, not in a scream of natural agony at that fearful torture, but calmly praying in divine compassion for His brutal and pitiless murderers—aye, and for all who in their sinful ignorance crucify Him afresh forever—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

And then the accursed tree—with its living human burden hanging upon it in helpless agony, and suffering fresh tortures as every movement irritated the fresh rents in hands and feet—was slowly heaved up by strong arms, and the end of it fixed firmly in a hole dug deep in the ground for that purpose. The feet were but a little raised above the earth. The victim was in full reach of every hand that might choose to strike, in close proximity to every gesture of insult and hatred. He might hang for hours to be abused, outraged, even tortured by the ever-moving multitude who, with that desire to see what is horrible which always characterizes the coarsest hearts, had thronged to gaze upon a sight which should rather have made them weep tears of blood.

When the cross was uplifted, the leading Jews, for the first time, prominently noticed the deadly insult in which Pilate had vented his indignation. Before, in their blind rage, they had imagined that the manner of His crucifixion was an insult aimed at *Jesus*; but now that they saw Him hanging between the two robbers, on a cross yet loftier, it suddenly flashed upon them that it was a public scorn inflicted upon *them*. For on the white wooden tablet smeared with gypsum, which was to be seen so conspicuously over the head of Jesus on the cross, ran, in black letters, an inscription in the three civilized languages of the ancient world—the three languages of which one at least was certain to be known by every single man in that assembled multitude—in the official Latin, in the current Greek, in the vernacular

Aramaic—informing all that this Man who was thus enduring a shameful, servile death—this Man thus crucified between two *sicarii* in the sight of the world—was “The King of the Jews.”

To Him who was crucified the poor malice seemed to have in it nothing of derision. Even on His cross He reigned; even there He seemed divinely elevated above the priests who had brought about His death, and the coarse, idle, vulgar multitude who had flocked to feed their greedy eyes upon His sufferings. The malice was quite impotent against One whose spiritual and moral nobleness struck awe into dying malefactors and heathen executioners, even in the lowest abyss of His physical degradation.

In order to prevent the possibility of any rescue, even at the last moment—since instances had been known of men taken from the cross and restored to life—a quaternion of soldiers with their centurion were left on the ground to guard the cross. The clothes of the victims always fell as perquisites to the men who had to perform so weary and disagreeable an office. Little dreaming how exactly they were fulfilling the mystic intimations of olden Jewish prophecy, they proceeded, therefore, to divide between them the garments of Jesus.

It was a scene of tumult. The great body of the people seem to have stood silently at gaze; but some few of them as they passed by the cross—perhaps some of the many false witnesses and other conspirators of the previous night—mocked at Jesus with insulting noises and furious taunts, especially bidding Him come down from the cross and save Himself, since He could destroy the Temple and build it in three days.

Unrestrained by the noble patience of the Sufferer, unsated by the accomplishment of their wicked vengeance, unmoved by the sight of helpless anguish and the look of eyes that began to glaze in death, they congratulated one another under His cross with scornful insolence—“He saved others,

Himself He cannot save." "Let this Christ, this King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." No wonder, then, that the ignorant soldiers took their share of mockery with these shameless and unvenerable hierarchs. No wonder that, at their midday meal, they pledged in mock hilarity the Dying Man, cruelly holding up towards His burning lips their cups of sour wine, and echoing the Jewish taunts against the weakness of the King whose throne was a cross, whose crown was thorns.

But amid the chorus of infamy Jesus spoke not. He could have spoken. The pains of crucifixion did not confuse the intellect or paralyze the powers of speech. But, except to bless and to encourage, and to add to the happiness and hope of others, Jesus spoke not. So far as the malice of the passers-by, and of priests and Sanhedrists, and soldiers, and of these poor robbers who suffered with Him, was concerned—as before during the trial so now upon the cross—He maintained unbroken His kingly silence.

But that silence, joined to His patient majesty and the divine holiness and innocence which radiated from Him like a halo, was more eloquent than any words. It told earliest on one of the crucified robbers. The dying robber had joined at first in the half-taunting, half-despairing appeal to a defeat and weakness which contradicted all that he had hoped; but now this defeat seemed to be greater than victory, and this weakness more irresistible than strength. As he looked, the faith in his heart dawned more and more into the perfect day. He had long ceased to utter any reproachful words; he now rebuked his comrade's blasphemies. Ought not the suffering innocence of Him who hung between them to shame into silence their just punishment and flagrant guilt? And so, turning his head to Jesus, he uttered the intense appeal, "O Jesus, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom." Then He, who had been mute amid invectives, spake at once in surpassing answer to that humble prayer, "Verily, I say to thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

Though none spoke to comfort Jesus—though deep grief, and terror, and amazement kept them dumb—yet there were hearts amid the crowd that beat in sympathy with the awful Sufferer. At a distance stood a number of women looking on, and perhaps, even at that dread hour, expecting His immediate deliverance. Many of these were women who had ministered to Him in Galilee, and had come from thence in the great band of Galilean pilgrims. Conspicuous among this heart-stricken group were His mother Mary, Mary of Magdala, Mary the wife of Clopas, mother of James and Joses, and Salome the wife of Zebedee. Some of them, as the hours advanced, stole nearer and nearer to the cross, and at length the flaming eye of the Saviour fell on His own mother Mary, as, with the sword piercing through and through her heart, she stood with the disciples whom He loved. His mother does not seem to have been much with Him during His ministry. It may be that the duties and cares of a humble home rendered it impossible. At any rate, the only occasions on which we hear of her are occasions when she is with His brethren, and is joined with them in endeavoring to influence, apart from His own purposes and authority, His Messianic course. But although at the very beginning of His ministry He had gently shown her that the earthly and filial relation was now to be transcended by one far more lofty and divine, and though this end of all her high hopes must have tried her faith with an overwhelming and unspeakable sorrow, yet she was true to Him in this supreme hour of His humiliation, and would have done for Him all that a mother's sympathy and love can do. Nor had He for a moment forgotten her who had bent over His infant slumbers, and with whom He had shared those thirty years in the cottage at Nazareth. Tenderly and sadly He thought of the future that awaited her during the remaining years of her life on earth, troubled as they must be by the tumults and persecutions of a struggling and nascent faith. After His resurrection her lot was wholly cast among His apostles, and



the apostle whom He loved the most, the apostle who was nearest to Him in heart and life, seemed the fittest to take care of her. To him, therefore—to John whom He had loved more than His brethren—to John whose head had leaned upon His breast at the Last Supper, He consigned her as a sacred charge. “Woman,” He said to her, in fewest words, but in words which breathed the uttermost spirit of tenderness, “Behold thy son”; and then to John, “Behold thy mother.” He could make no gesture with those pierced hands, but He could bend His head. They listened in speechless emotion, but from that hour—perhaps from that very moment—leading her away from a spectacle which did but torture her soul with unavailing agony, that disciple took her to his own home.

It was now noon, and at the Holy City the sunshine should have been burning over that scene of horror with a power such as it has in the full depth of an English summertime. But instead of this, the face of the heavens was black, and the noonday sun was “turned into darkness,” on “this great and terrible day of the Lord.” The taunts and jeers of the Jewish priests and the heathen soldiers were evidently confined to the earlier hours of the Crucifixion. Its later stages seem to have thrilled alike the guilty and the innocent with emotions of dread and horror. Of the incidents of those last three hours we are told nothing, and that awful obscuration of the noonday sun may well have overawed every heart into an inaction respecting which there was nothing to relate. What Jesus suffered then for us men and our salvation we cannot know, for during those three hours He hung upon His cross in silence and darkness; or, if He spoke, there were none there to record His words. But towards the close of that time His anguish culminated, and—emptied to the very uttermost of that glory which He had since the world began—drinking to the very deepest dregs the cup of humiliation and bitterness—enduring not only to have taken upon Him the form of a servant but also

to suffer the last infamy which human hatred could impose on servile helplessness—He uttered that mysterious cry, of which the full significance will never be fathomed by man—“*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*” (“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”)

In those words He borrowed from David's utter agony the expression of His own. In that hour He was alone. Sinking from depth to depth of unfathomable suffering, until, at the close approach of a death which—because He was God, and yet had been made man—was more awful to Him than it could ever be to any of the sons of men, it seemed as if even His divine humanity could endure no more.

Now the end was very rapidly approaching, and Jesus, who had been hanging for nearly six hours upon the cross, was suffering from that torment of thirst which is most difficult of all for the human frame to bear—perhaps the most unmitigated of the many separate sources of anguish which were combined in this worst form of death. No doubt this burning thirst was aggravated by seeing the Roman soldiers drinking so near the cross; and happily for mankind, Jesus had never sanctioned the unnatural affectation of stoic impassibility. And so He uttered the one sole word of physical suffering which had been wrung from Him by all the hours in which He had endured the extreme of all that man can inflict. He cried aloud, “I thirst.” Probably a few hours before, the cry would have only provoked a roar of frantic mockery; but now the lookers-on were reduced by awe to a readier humanity. Near the cross there lay on the ground the large earthen vessel containing the *posca*, which was the ordinary drink of the Roman soldiers. The mouth of it was filled with a piece of sponge, which served as a cork. Instantly someone—we know not whether he was friend or enemy or merely one who was there out of idle curiosity—took out the sponge and dipped it in the *posca* to give it to Jesus. But low as was the elevation of the cross, the head of the Sufferer, as it rested on the horizontal beam

of the accursed tree, was just beyond the man's reach; and therefore he put the sponge at the end of a stalk of hyssop—about a foot long—and held it up to the parched and dying lips. Even this simple act of pity, which Jesus did not refuse, seemed to jar upon the condition of nervous excitement with which some of the multitude were looking on. "Let be," they said to the man, "let us see whether Elias is coming to save Him." The man did not desist from his act of mercy, but when it was done he, too, seems to have echoed those uneasy words. But Elias came not, nor human comforter, nor angel deliverer. It was the will of God, it was the will of the Son of God, that He should be "perfected through sufferings"; that—for the eternal example of all His children as long as the world should last—He should "endure unto the end."

And now the end was come. Once more, in the words of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, but adding to them that title of trustful love which, through Him, is permitted to all His children, "Father," He said, "into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Then with one more great effort He uttered the last cry—the one victorious word—"It is finished." It may be that that great cry ruptured some of the vessels of His heart, for no sooner had it been uttered than He bowed His head upon His breast and yielded His life "a ransom for many"—a willing sacrifice to His Heavenly Father. "Finished was His holy life; with His life His struggle, with His struggle His work, with His work the redemption, with the redemption the foundation of the new world." At that moment the vail of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. An earthquake shook the earth and split the rocks, and as it rolled away from their places the great stones which closed and covered the cavern sepulchres of the Jews, so it seemed to the imaginations of many to have disimprisoned the spirits of the dead, and to have filled the air with ghostly visitants, who after Christ had risen appeared to linger in the Holy City. These circumstances of

amazement, joined to all they had observed in the bearing of the Crucified, cowed even the cruel and gay indifference of the Roman soldiers. On the centurion, who was in command of them, the whole scene had exercised a yet deeper influence. As he stood opposite to the cross and saw the Saviour die, he glorified God and exclaimed, "This Man was a Son of God." Even the multitude, utterly sobered from their furious excitement and frantic rage, began to be weighted down with a guilty consciousness that the scene which they had witnessed had in it something more awful than they could have conceived, and as they returned to Jerusalem they wailed, and beat upon their breasts. Well might they do so! This was the last drop in a full cup of wickedness; this was the beginning of the end of their city, and name, and race.

The sun was westering as the darkness rolled away from the completed sacrifice. They who had not thought it a pollution to inaugurate their feast by the murder of their Messiah were seriously alarmed lest the sanctity of the following day—which began at sunset—should be compromised by the hanging of the corpses on the cross. And horrible to relate, the crucified often lived for many hours—nay, even, for two days—in their torture. The Jews therefore begged Pilate that their legs might be broken, and their bodies taken down. This *crurifragium*, as it was called, consisted in striking the legs of the sufferers with a heavy mallet, a violence which seemed always to have hastened, if it did not instantly cause, their death. Nor would the Jews be the only persons who would be anxious to hasten the end, by giving the deadly blow. Until life was extinct, the soldiers appointed to guard the execution dared not leave the ground. The wish, therefore, was readily granted. The soldiers broke the legs of the two malefactors first, and then, coming to Jesus, found that the great cry had been indeed His last, and that He was dead already. They did not, therefore, break His legs, and thus unwittingly preserved the symbol-

ism of the Paschal lamb, of which He was the antitype, and of which it had been commanded that "a bone of it shall not be broken." And yet, as He might be only in a syncope—as instances had been known in which men apparently dead had been taken down from the cross and resuscitated—and as the lives of the soldiers would have had to answer for any irregularity, one of them, in order to make death certain, drove the broad head of his *hasta* into His side. The wound, as it was meant to do, pierced the region of the heart, and "forthwith," says John with an emphatic appeal to the truthfulness of his eyewitness, "forthwith came there out blood and water." Whether the water was due to some abnormal pathological conditions caused by the dreadful complication of the Saviour's sufferings—or whether it rather means that the pericardium had been rent by the spear-point, and that those who took down the body observed some drops of its serum mingled with the blood—in either case that lance-thrust was sufficient to hush all the heretical assertions that Jesus had only seemed to die; and as it assured the soldiers so should it assure all who have doubted, that He, who on the third day rose again, had in truth been crucified, dead, and buried, and that His soul had passed into the unseen world.

## Chapter 36

### THE RESURRECTION

THE sun was now on the edge of the horizon, and the Sabbath Day was near. And "that Sabbath Day was a high day," a Sabbath of peculiar splendor and solemnity, because it was at once a Sabbath and a Passover. The Jews had taken every precaution to prevent the ceremonial pollution of a day so sacred, and were anxious that immediately after the death of the victims had been secured, their bodies should be taken from the cross. About the sepulture they did not trouble themselves, leaving it to the chance good offices of friends and relatives to huddle the malefactors into their nameless graves. The dead body of Jesus was left hanging till the last because a person who could not easily be slighted had gone to obtain leave from Pilate to dispose of it as he wished.

This was Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man of high character and blameless life, and a distinguished member of the Sanhedrin. Although timidity of disposition, or weakness of faith, had hitherto prevented him from openly declaring his belief in Jesus, yet he had abstained from sharing in the vote of the Sanhedrin, or countenancing their crime. And now sorrow and indignation inspired him with courage. Since it was too late to declare his sympathy for Jesus as a living Prophet, he would at least give a sign of his devotion to Him as the martyred victim of a wicked conspiracy. Flinging secrecy and caution to the winds, he no sooner saw that the cross on Golgotha now bore a lifeless burden than he

went to Pilate on the very evening of the Crucifixion, and begged that the dead body might be given him. Although the Romans left their crucified slaves to be devoured by dogs and ravens, Pilate had no difficulty in sanctioning the more humane and reverent custom of the Jews, which required, even in extreme, the burial of the dead. He was, however, amazed at the speediness with which death had supervened, and sending for the centurion, asked whether it had taken place sufficiently long to distinguish it from a faint or swoon. On ascertaining that such was the fact, he at once assigned the body, doubtless with some real satisfaction, to the care of this "honorable councilor." Without wasting a moment, Joseph purchased a long piece of linen, and took the body from its cross.

Close by the place of crucifixion—if not an actual part of it—was a garden belonging to Joseph of Arimathea, and in its enclosure he had caused a new tomb to be hewn for himself out of the solid rock, that he might be buried in the near precincts of the Holy City. The tomb had never been used, but in spite of the awful sacredness which the Jews attached to their rock-hewn sepulchers, and the sensitive scrupulosity with which they shrank from all contact with a corpse, Joseph never hesitated to give up for the body of Jesus the last home which he had designed for his own use. But the preparations had to be hurried, because when the sun had set the Sabbath would have begun. All that they could do, therefore, was to wash the corpse, to lay it amid the spices, to wrap the head in a white napkin, to roll the fine linen round and round the wounded limbs, and to lay the body reverently in the rocky niche. Then, with the united toil of several men, they rolled a great stone to the horizontal aperture; and scarcely had they accomplished this when, as the sun sank behind the hills of Jerusalem, the new Sabbath dawned.

Mary of Magdala, and Mary the mother of James and Josès, had seated themselves in the garden to mark well the

place of sepulture, and other Galilean women had also noticed the spot, and had hurried home to prepare fresh spices and ointments before the Sabbath began, that they might hasten back early on the morning of Sunday, and complete that embalming of the body, which Joseph and Nicodemus had only hastily begun. They spent in quiet that miserable Sabbath, which, for the broken hearts of all who loved Jesus, was a Sabbath of anguish and despair.

But the enemies of Christ were not so inactive. The awful misgiving of guilty consciences was not removed even by His death upon the cross. They recalled, with dreadful reminiscence, the rumored prophecies of His resurrection—the sign of the Prophet Jonah, which He had said would alone be given them—the great utterance about the destroyed Temple, which He would in three days raise up; and these intimations, which were but dim to a crushed and wavering faith, were read, like fiery letters upon the wall, by the illuminating glare of an uneasy guilt. Pretending, therefore, to be afraid lest His body should be stolen by His disciples for purposes of imposture, they begged that, until the third day, the tomb might be securely guarded. Pilate gave them a brief and haughty permission to do anything they liked; for—apparently in the evening, when the great Paschal Sabbath was over—they sent their guard to sell the *golal*, and to watch the sepulcher.

Night passed, and before the faint streak of dawn began to silver the darkness of that first great Easter Day, the passionate love of those women, who had lingered latest by the corpse, made them also the earliest at the tomb. Carrying with them their precious spices, but knowing nothing of the watch or seal, they anxiously inquired among themselves, as they groped their way with sad and timid steps through the glimmering darkness, who should roll away for them the great stone which closed the sepulcher. The two Marys were foremost of this little devoted band, and after them came Salome and Joanna. They found their difficulty solved



for them. It became known then, or afterwards, that some dazzling angelic vision in white robes had terrified the keepers of the tomb, and had rolled the stone from the tomb amid the shocks of earthquake. And as they came to the tomb, there they, too, saw angels in white apparel, who bade them hasten back to the apostles, and tell them—and especially Peter—that Christ, according to His own word, had risen from the dead, and would go before them, like a shepherd, into their own beloved and native Galilee. They hurried back in a tumult of rapture and alarm, telling no one except the disciples; and even to the disciples their words sounded like an idle tale. But Mary of Magdala, who seems to have received a separate and special intimation, hastened at once to Peter and John. No sooner had they received this startling news than they rose to see with their own eyes what had happened. John outstripped in speed his elder companion, and arriving first, stooped down and gazed in silent wonder into that open grave. The grave was empty, and the linen cerements were lying neatly folded each in its proper place. Then Peter came up, and with his usual impetuosity, heedless of ceremonial pollution, and of every consideration but his love and his astonishment, plunged into the sepulcher. John followed him, and saw, and believed; and the two apostles took back the undoubted certainty to their wondering brethren. In spite of fear, and anxiety, and that dull intelligence which, by their own confession, was so slow to realize the truths they had been taught, there dawned upon them, even then, the trembling hope which was so rapidly to become the absolute conviction that Christ had risen indeed.

But as yet no eye had seen Him; and to Mary of Magdala—to her who loved most because she had been forgiven most, and out of whose soul, now ardent as flame and clear as crystal, He had cast seven devils—was this glorious honor first vouchsafed. Even the vision of angels had not soothed the passion of agitation and alarm which she experienced

when, returning once more to the tomb, she found that it was no longer possible for her to pay the last offices of devotion and tenderness to the crucified body of her Lord. From her impassioned soul not even the white-robed visions and angel voices could expel the anguish which she experienced in the one haunting thought, "They have taken away my Lord out of the sepulcher, and I know not where they have laid Him." With her whole heart absorbed in this thought she turned away—and, lo, Jesus Himself standing before her. It was Jesus, but not as she had known Him. There was something spiritual, something not of earth, in that risen and glorified body. Some accident of dress, or appearance, made her fancy that it was the keeper of the garden, and in the eager hope that he can explain to her the secret of that empty and angel-haunted grave, she exclaims to Him in an agony of appeal—turning her head aside as she addressed Him, perhaps that she might hide her streaming tears—"Oh, sir, if you took Him away, tell me where you put Him and I will take Him."

Jesus saith to her, "Mary!"

That one word, in those awful yet tender tones of voice, at once penetrated to her heart. Turning towards Him, trying apparently to clasp His feet or the hem of His garment, she cried to Him in her native Aramaic, "Rabboni!" "Oh, my Master!" and then remained speechless with her transport. Jesus Himself gently checked the passion of her enthusiasm. "Cling not to Me," He exclaimed, "for not yet have I ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God." Awe-struck, she hastened to obey. She repeated to them that solemn message—and through all future ages has thrilled that first utterance, which made on the minds of those who heard it so indelible an impression—"I have seen the Lord!"

Nor was her testimony unsupported. Jesus met the other women also, and said to them, "All hail!" Terror mingled

with their emotion, as they clasped His feet. "Fear not," He said to them; "go, bid My brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see Me."

The third appearance of Jesus was to Peter. The details of it are wholly unknown to us. They may have been of a nature too personal to have been revealed. The fact rests on the express testimony of Luke and of Paul.

On the same day the Lord's fourth appearance was accompanied with circumstances of the deepest interest. Two of the disciples were on their way to a village named Emmaus, of uncertain site, but about eight miles from Jerusalem, and were discoursing with sad and anxious hearts on the awful incidents of the last two days, when a Stranger joined them and asked them the cause of their clouded looks and anxious words. They stopped, and looked at this unknown traveler with a dubious and unfriendly glance; and when one of the two, whose name was Cleopas, spoke in reply, there is a touch of surprise and suspicion in the answer which he ventured to give. "Dost thou live alone as a stranger in Jerusalem, and dost thou not know what things happened there in these last days?" "What things?" He asked them. Then they told Him how all their yearning hopes that Jesus had been the great Prophet who should redeem His people had been dashed to the earth, and how all His mighty deeds before God and the people had ended two days back on the shameful cross. They described the feeling of amazement with which, on this the third day, they had heard the women's rumors of angel vision, and the certain testimony of some of their brethren that the tomb was empty now. "But," added the speaker with a sigh of incredulity and sorrow—"but Him they saw not."

Then reproaching them with the dullness of their intelligence and their affections, the Stranger showed them how through all the Old Testament from Moses onwards there was one long prophecy of the sufferings no less than of the glory of Christ. In such high converse they drew near to

Emmaus, and the Stranger seemed to be going onwards, but they pressed Him to stay, and as they sat down to their simple meal, and He blessed and brake the bread, suddenly their eyes were opened, and in spite of the altered form, they recognized that He who was with them was the Lord. But even as they recognized Him, He was with them no longer. "Did not our heart burn within us," they exclaimed to each other "while He was speaking with us in the way, while He was opening to us the Scriptures?" Rising instantly, they returned to Jerusalem with the strange and joyous tidings. They found rapturous affirmation. "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon!"

Once more, for the fifth time on that eternally memorable Easter Day, Jesus manifested Himself to His disciples. Ten of them were sitting together, with doors closed for fear of the Jews. As they exchanged and discussed their happy intelligence, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, with the words, "Peace be with you." The unwonted aspect of that glorified body—the awful significance of the fact that He had risen from the dead—scared and frightened them. The presence of their Lord was indeed corporeal, but it was changed. They thought that it was a spirit which was standing before them. "Why are ye troubled?" He asked, "and why do anxious doubts rise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I; handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." Even while He spoke He showed them His hands and His side. And then, while joy, amazement, incredulity, were all struggling in their hearts, He asked them if they had there anything to eat; and yet further to assure them, ate a piece of broiled fish in their presence. Then once more He said, "Peace be unto you. As My Father hath sent Me, even so I send you."

One only of the apostles had been absent—Thomas the Twin. His character, as we have seen already, was affectionate, but melancholy. To him the news seemed too good

to be true. In vain did the other disciples assure him, "We have seen the Lord." Happily for us, though less happily for him, he declared with strong asseveration that nothing would convince him, short of actually putting his own finger into the print of the nails, and his hands into His side. A week passed, and the faithfully-recorded doubts of the anxious apostle remained unsatisfied. On the seventh day afterwards the eleven were again assembled within closed doors. Once more Jesus appeared to them, and after His usual gentle and solemn blessing, called Thomas, and bade him stretch forth his finger, and put it in the print of the nails, and to thrust his hand into the spear-wound of His side, and to be "not faithless, but believing." "My Lord and my God!" exclaimed the incredulous apostle, with a burst of conviction. "Because thou hast seen Me," said Jesus, "thou hast believed; blessed are they who saw not and yet believed."

The next appearance of the risen Saviour was to seven of the apostles by the Sea of Galilee—Simon, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee, and two others—not improbably Philip and Andrew—who are not named. A pause had occurred in the visits of Jesus and before they returned to Jerusalem at Pentecost to receive the promised outpouring of the Spirit, Simon said that he should resume for the day his old trade of a fisherman. There was no longer a common purse, and as their means of subsistence were gone, this seemed to be the only obvious way of obtaining an honest maintenance. The others proposed to join him, and they set sail in the evening because night is the best time for fishing. All night they toiled in vain. At early dawn, in the misty twilight, there stood on the shore the figure of One whom they did not recognize. A voice asked them if they had caught anything. "No," was the despondent answer. "Fling your net to the right side of the vessel, and ye shall find." They made the cast, and instantly were scarcely able to draw the net from the multitude of fishes. The incident awoke, with overwhelming force, the memory of earlier days.

"It is the Lord," whispered John to Peter; and instantly the warm-hearted enthusiast, tightening his fisher's tunic round his loins, leaped into the sea, to swim across the hundred yards which separated him from Jesus, and cast himself, all wet from the waves, before His feet. More slowly the others followed, dragging the strained but unbroken net, with its hundred and fifty-three fishes. A wood fire was burning on the strand, some bread lay beside it, and some fish were being broiled on the glowing embers.

The happy meal ended in silence, and then Jesus said to His weak but fond apostle, "Simon"—(it was no time as yet to restore to him the name of Peter)—"Simon, son of Jonas, honorest thou Me more than these?"

"Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee."

"Tend My sheep."

But Simon had thrice denied, and therefore it was fitting that he should thrice confess. Again, after a brief pause, came the question—and this time with the weaker but warmer word which the apostle himself had chosen—"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?"

And Simon, deeply humbled and distressed, exclaimed, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou seest that I love Thee."

"Feed My beloved sheep." Then very solemnly He added, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast younger thou didst gird thyself, and walk where thou wouldest; but when thou art old thou shalt stretch out thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and shall lead thee where thou wilt not."

It may have been on this occasion that Jesus told His disciples of the mountain in Galilee, where He would meet all who knew and loved Him for the last time. Whether it was Tabor, or the Mountain of Beatitudes, we do not know, but more than five hundred of His disciples collected at the given time with the eleven, and received from Jesus His last commands, to teach and baptize throughout all nations; and the last promise, that He would be with them always

even to the end of the world. Writing more than twenty years after this time, Paul gives us the remarkable testimony, that the greater number of these eyewitnesses of the Resurrection were yet alive, and that some only were "fallen asleep."

A ninth appearance of Jesus is unrecorded in the Gospels, and is known to us from a single allusion in Paul alone. "I delivered unto you," he writes to the Corinthians, "that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once . . . after that He was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all He appeared to me also, as to the abortive born [of the apostolic family]."

Forty days had now elapsed since the Crucifixion. During those forty days nine times had He been visibly present to human eyes, and had been touched by human hands. But His body had not been merely the human body, nor liable to merely human laws, nor had He lived during those days the life of men. The time had now come when His earthly presence should be taken away from them forever, until He returned in glory to judge the world. He met them in Jerusalem, and as He led them with Him towards Bethany, He bade them wait in the Holy City until they had received the promise of the Spirit. He checked their eager inquiry about the times and seasons, and bade them be His witnesses in all the world. These last farewells must have been uttered in some of the wild secluded upland country that surrounds the little village; and when they were over, He lifted up His hands and blessed them, and, even as He blessed them, was parted from them, and as He passed from before their yearning eyes "a cloud received Him out of their sight."

Between us and His visible presence—between us and that glorified Redeemer who now sitteth at the right hand of

God—that cloud still rolls. But the eye of faith can pierce it; the incense of true prayer can rise above it; through it the dew of blessing can descend. And if He is gone away, yet He has given us in His Holy Spirit a nearer sense of His presence, a closer infolding in the arms of His tenderness, than we could have enjoyed even if we had lived with Him of old in the home of Nazareth, or sailed with Him in the little boat over the crystal waters of Gennesareth. We may be as near to Him at all times—and more than all when we kneel down to pray—as the Beloved Disciple was when he laid his head upon His breast. The word of God is very nigh us, even in our mouths and in our hearts. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant. To all who will listen He still speaks. He promised to be with us always, even to the end of the world, and we have not found His promise fail. It was but for thirty-three short years of a short lifetime that He lived on earth; it was but for three broken and troubled years that He preached the Gospel of the kingdom; but forever, even until all the aeons have been closed, and the earth itself, with the heavens that now are, have passed away, shall every one of His true and faithful children find peace and hope and forgiveness in His name, and that name shall be called Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, “God with us.”